



*Patterns for*  
**LIVING**





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# *Patterns for* **LIVING**

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## FOREWORD

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PATTERNS FOR LIVING grew out of the editors' convictions that young people today are actively seeking answers to the personal and social problems that confront them and that literature may help them to find meaning and design for their lives. If in his reading of the selections contained in this volume the student finds his own limited experience clarified and extended, he may be stimulated to active exploration of the ideas and experience recorded in literature and to articulate expression of them.

This alternate edition of volume one, like the original, deals with problems the young person is certain to meet in his search for personal satisfaction, but it aims to keep him aware also of larger social relationships and of the shifting patterns of an era of rapid change. His reading begins with selections that present simple sense experiences and continues with those that illustrate the more complex satisfactions sought by the individual in his personal relationships, in the arts, in science, in religion, and in living philosophies which present a synthesis of the various personal quests.

Within the various topical divisions we have grouped the selections according to literary types, but in general we have avoided formal or academic methods of organization. We have placed selections in the order most likely to stimulate active thinking. The presentation of a theory or concept is often followed by its concrete illustration; affirmative and negative views of the same problem are presented in juxtaposition. The study questions and suggestions for writing grow directly out of the reading and are designed to point relationships and differences and to stimulate independent thinking and desire for expression. Although most of the material is contemporary, a number of classics have been included to point the continuity of human experience and the pertinence of the answers one may find in the writers of another day. Our primary interest has been to represent a wide range of human experience that will capture the interest of the student and arouse in him a sense of his relationship with thinkers and artists of past and present who may lead him to an enrichment of his own life.

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# THE WORLD OF THE SENSES AND NATURE

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## SEEING LIFE

*Arnold Bennett (1914)*

### I

A YOUNG dog, inexperienced, sadly lacking in even primary education, ambles and frisks along the footpath of Fulham Road, near the mysterious gates of a Marist convent. He is a large puppy, on the way to be a dog of much dignity, but at present he has little to recommend him but that gawky elegance and that bounding gratitude for the gift of life which distinguish the normal puppy. He is an ignorant fool. He might have entered the convent of nuns and had a fine time, but instead he steps off the pavement into the road, the road being a vast and interesting continent imperfectly explored. His confidence in his nose, in his agility, and in the goodness of God is touching, absolutely painful to witness. He glances casually at a huge, towering vermilion construction that is whizzing towards him on four wheels, preceded by a glint of brass and a wisp of steam; and then with disdain he ignores it as less important than a speck of odorous matter in the mud. The next instant he is lying inert in the mud. His confidence in the goodness of God had been misplaced. Since the beginning of time God had ordained him a victim.

An impressive thing happens. The motor-bus reluctantly slackens and stops. Not the differential brake, nor the footbrake, has arrested the motor-bus, but the invisible brake of public opinion, acting by administrative transmission. There is not a policeman in sight. Theoretically, the motor-bus is free to whiz onward in its flight to the paradise of Shoreditch, but in practice it is paralysed by dread. A man in brass buttons and a stylish cap leaps down from it, and the blackened demon who sits on its neck also leaps down from it, and they move gingerly towards the puppy. A little while ago the motor-bus might have overturned a human cyclist or so, and proceeded nonchalantly on its way. But now even a puppy requires a post-mortem: such is the force of public opinion aroused. Two policemen appear in the distance.

"A street accident" is now in being, and a crowd gathers with calm joy and stares, passive and determined. The puppy offers no sign whatever; just lies in the road. Then a boy, destined probably to a great future by reason of his singular faculty of initiative, goes to the puppy and carries him by the scruff of the neck to the shelter of the gutter. Relinquished by the boy, the

lithe puppy falls into an easy horizontal attitude, and seems bent upon repose. The boy lifts the puppy's head to examine it, and the head drops back wearily. The puppy is dead. No cry, no blood, no disfigurement! Even no perceptible jolt of the wheel as it climbed over the obstacle of the puppy's body! A wonderfully clean and perfect accident!

The increasing crowd stares with beatific placidity. People emerge impatiently from the bowels of the throbbing motor-bus and slip down from its back, and either join the crowd or vanish. The two policemen and the crew of the motor-bus have now met in parley. The conductor and the driver have an air at once nervous and resigned; their gestures are quick and vivacious. The policemen, on the other hand, indicate by their slow and huge movements that eternity is theirs. And they could not be more sure of the conductor and the driver if they had them manacled and leashed. The conductor and the driver admit the absolute dominion of the elephantine policemen; they admit that before the simple will of the policemen inconvenience, lost minutes, shortened leisure, docked wages count as less than naught. And the policemen are carelessly sublime, well knowing that magistrates, jails, and the very Home Secretary on his throne—yes, and a whole system of conspiracy and perjury and brutality—are at their beck in case of need. And yet occasionally in the demeanour of the policemen towards the conductor and the driver there is a silent message that says: "After all, we, too, are working men like you, overworked and underpaid and bursting with grievances in the service of the pitiless and dishonest public. We, too, have wives and children and privations and frightful apprehensions. We, too, have to struggle desperately. Only the awful magic of these garments and of the garter which we wear on our wrists sets an abyss between us and you." And the conductor writes and one of the policemen writes, and they keep on writing while the traffic makes beautiful curves to avoid them.

The still increasing crowd continues to stare in the pure blankness of pleasure. A close-shaved, well-dressed, middle-aged man, with a copy of *The Sportsman* in his podgy hand, who has descended from the motor-bus, starts stamping his feet. "I was knocked down by a taxi last year," he says fiercely. "But nobody took no notice of *that*! Are they going to stop here all the blank morning for a blank tyke?" And for all his respectable appearance, his features become debased, and he emits a jet of disgusting profanity and brings most of the Trinity into the thunderous assertion that he has paid his fare. Then a man passes wheeling a muck-cart. And he stops and talks a long time with the other uniforms, because he, too, wears vestiges of a uniform. And the crowd never moves nor ceases to stare. Then the new arrival stoops and picks up the unclaimed, masterless puppy, and flings it, all soft and yielding, into the horrid mess of the cart, and passes on. And only that which is immortal and divine of the puppy remains behind, floating, perhaps, like an invisible vapour over the scene of the tragedy.

Nobody in the crowd comprehends what they are about. At length the driver separates himself, but is drawn back, and a new parley is commenced. But everything ends. The policemen turn on their immense heels. The driver and conductor race towards the motor-bus. The bell rings, the motor-bus, quite empty, disappears snorting round the corner into Walham Green. The crowd is now lessening. But it separates with reluctance, many of its members continuing to stare with intense absorption at the place where the puppy lay or the place where the policemen stood. An appreciable interval elapses before the "street accident" has entirely ceased to exist as a phenomenon.

The members of the crowd follow their noses, and during the course of the day remark to acquaintances:

"Saw a dog run over by a motor-bus in the Fulham Road this morning! Killed dead!"

And that is all they do remark. That is all they have witnessed. They will not, and could not, give intelligible and interesting particulars of the affair (unless it were as to the breed of the dog or the number of the bus-service). They have watched a dog run over. They analyse neither their sensations nor the phenomenon. They have witnessed it whole, as a bad writer uses a *cliché*. They have observed—that is to say, they have really seen—nothing.

## II

It will be well for us not to assume an attitude of condescension towards the crowd. Because in the matter of looking without seeing we are all about equal. We all go to and fro in a state of the observing faculties which somewhat resembles coma. We are all content to look and not see.

And if and when, having comprehended that the role of observer is not passive but active, we determine by an effort to rouse ourselves from the coma and really to see the spectacle of the world (a spectacle surpassing circuses and even street accidents in sustained dramatic interest), we shall discover, slowly in the course of time, that the act of seeing, which seems so easy, is not so easy as it seems. Let a man resolve, "I will keep my eyes open on the way to the office of a morning," and the probability is that for many mornings he will see naught that is not trivial, and that his system of perspective will be absurdly distorted. The unusual, the unaccustomed, will infallibly attract him, to the exclusion of what is fundamental and universal. Travel makes observers of us all, but the things which as travellers we observe generally show how unskilled we are in the new activity.

A man went to Paris for the first time, and observed right off that the carriages of suburban trains had seats on the roof like a tram-car. He was so thrilled by the remarkable discovery that he observed almost nothing else. This enormous fact occupied the whole foreground of his perspective. He returned home and announced that Paris was a place where people rode on

English person would ever guess the phenomenon which vanquished all others in her mind on the opening day. She saw a cat walking across a street. The vision excited her. For in Paris cats do not roam in thoroughfares, because there are practically no houses with gardens or "areas"; the flat system is unfavourable to the enlargement of cats. I remember once, in the days when observation had first presented itself to me as a beautiful pastime, getting up very early and making the circuit of inner London before summer dawn in quest of interesting material. And the one note I gathered was that the ground in front of the all-night coffee-stalls was white with eggshells! What I needed then was an operation for cataract. I also remember taking a man to the opera who had never seen an opera. The work was *Lohengrin*. When we came out he said: "That swan's neck was rather stiff." And it was all he did say. We went and had a drink. He was not mistaken. His observation was most just; but his perspective was that of those literary critics who give ten lines to pointing out three slips of syntax, and three lines to an ungrammatical admission that the novel under survey is not wholly tedious.

But a man may acquire the ability to observe even a large number of facts, and still remain in the infantile stage of observation. I have read, in some work of literary criticism, that Dickens could walk up one side of a long, busy street and down the other, and then tell you in their order the names on all the shop-signs; the fact was alleged as an illustration of his great powers of observation. Dickens was a great observer, but he would assuredly have been a still greater observer had he been a little less pre-occupied with trivial and uncoördinated details. Good observation consists not in multiplicity of detail, but in coördination of detail according to a true perspective of relative importance, so that a finally just general impression may be reached in the shortest possible time. The skilled observer is he who does not have to change his mind. One has only to compare one's present adjusted impression of an intimate friend with one's first impression of him to perceive the astounding inadequacy of one's powers of observation. The man as one has learnt to see him is simply not the same who walked into one's drawing-room on the day of introduction.

There are, by the way, three sorts of created beings who are sentimentally supposed to be able to judge individuals at the first glance: women, children, and dogs. By virtue of a mystic gift with which rumour credits them, they are never mistaken. It is merely not true. Women are constantly quite wrong in the estimates based on their "feminine instinct"; they sometimes even admit it; and the matrimonial courts prove it *passim*. Children are more often wrong than women. And as for dogs, it is notorious that they are forever being taken in by plausible scoundrels; the perspective of dogs is grotesque. Not seldom have I grimly watched the gradual disillusion of deceived dogs. Nevertheless, the sentimental legend of the infallibility of women, children, and dogs will persist in Anglo-Saxon countries.

## III

One is curious about one's fellow-creatures: therefore one watches them. And generally the more intelligent one is, the more curious one is, and the more one observes. The mere satisfaction of this curiosity is in itself a worthy end, and would alone justify the business of systematised observation. But the aim of observation may, and should, be expressed in terms more grandiose. Human curiosity counts among the highest social virtues (as indifference counts among the basest defects), because it leads to the disclosure of the causes of character and temperament and thereby to a better understanding of the springs of human conduct. Observation is not practised directly with this high end in view (save by prigs and other futile souls); nevertheless it is a moral act and must inevitably promote kindliness—whether we like it or not. It also sharpens the sense of beauty. An ugly deed—such as a deed of cruelty—takes on artistic beauty when its origin and hence its fitness in the general scheme begin to be comprehended. In the perspective of history we can derive an æsthetic pleasure from the tranquil scrutiny of all kinds of conduct—as well, for example, of a Renaissance Pope as of a Savonarola. Observation endows our day and our street with the romantic charm of history, and stimulates charity—not the charity which signs cheques, but the more precious charity which puts itself to the trouble of understanding. The one condition is that the observer must never lose sight of the fact that what he is trying to see is life, is the woman next door, is the man in the train—and not a concourse of abstractions. To appreciate all this is the first inspiring preliminary to sound observation.

## IV

The second preliminary is to realise that all physical phenomena are inter-related, that there is nothing which does not bear on everything else. The whole spectacular and sensual show—what the eye sees, the ear hears, the nose scents, the tongue tastes and the skin touches—is a cause or an effect of human conduct. Naught can be ruled out as negligible, as not forming part of the equation. Hence he who would beyond all others see life for himself—I naturally mean the novelist and playwright—ought to embrace all phenomena in his curiosity. Being finite, he cannot. Of course he cannot! But he can, by obtaining a broad notion of the whole, determine with some accuracy the position and relative importance of the particular series of phenomena to which his instinct draws him. If he does not thus envisage the immense background of his special interests, he will lose the most precious feeling for interplay and proportion without which all specialism becomes distorted and positively darkened.

Now, the main factor in life on this planet is the planet itself. Any logically conceived survey of existence must begin with geographical and climatic phenomena. This is surely obvious. If you say that you are not interested in

meteorology or the configurations of the earth, I say that you deceive yourself. You are. For an east wind may upset your liver and cause you to insult your wife. Beyond question the most important fact about, for example, Great Britain is that it is an island. We sail amid the Hebrides, and then talk of the fine qualities and the distressing limitations of those islanders; it ought to occur to us English that we are talking of ourselves in little. In moments of journalistic vainglory we are apt to refer to the "sturdy island race," meaning us. But that we are insular in the full significance of the horrid word is certain. Why not? A genuine observation of the supreme phenomenon that Great Britain is surrounded by water—an effort to keep it always at the back of the consciousness—will help to explain all the minor phenomena of British existence. Geographical knowledge is the mother of discernment, for the varying physical characteristics of the earth are the sole direct terrestrial influence determining the evolution of original vital energy.

All other influences are secondary, and have been effects of character and temperament before becoming causes. Perhaps the greatest of them are roads and architecture. Nothing could be more English than English roads, or more French than French roads. Enter England from France, let us say through the gate of Folkestone, and the architectural illustration which greets you (if you can look and see) is absolutely dramatic in its spectacular force. You say that there is no architecture in Folkestone. But Folkestone, like other towns, is just as full of architecture as a wood is full of trees. As the train winds on its causeway over the sloping town you perceive below you thousands of squat little homes, neat, tended, respectable, comfortable, prim, at once unostentatious and conceited. Each a separate, clearly defined entity. Each saying to the others: "Don't look over my wall, and I won't look over yours!" Each with a ferocious jealousy bent on guarding its own individuality! Each a stronghold—an island! And all careless of the general effect, but making a very impressive general effect. The English race is below you. Your own son is below you insisting on the inviolability of his own den of a bedroom! . . . And contrast all that with the immense communistic and splendid façades of a French town, and work out the implications. If you really intend to see life you cannot afford to be blind to such thrilling phenomena.

Yet an inexperienced, unguided curiosity would be capable of walking through a French street and through an English street, and noting chiefly that whereas English lamp-posts spring from the kerb, French lamp-posts cling to the side of the house! Not that that detail is not worth noting. It is—in its place. French lamp-posts are part of what we call the "interesting character" of a French street. We say of a French street that it is "full of character." As if an English street was not! Such is blindness—to be cured by travel and the exercise of the logical faculty, most properly termed common sense. If one is struck by the magnificence of the great towns of the Continent, one should ratiocinate, and conclude that a major characteristic of the great towns of England is their shabby and higgledy-piggledy slovenliness. It is so. But there



are people who have lived fifty years in Manchester, Leeds, Hull, and Hanley without noticing it. The English idiosyncrasy is in that awful external slovenliness too, causing it, and being caused by it. Every street is a mirror, an illustration, an exposition, an explanation, of the human beings who live in it. Nothing in it is to be neglected. Everything in it is valuable, if the perspective is maintained. Nevertheless, in the narrow individualistic novels of English literature—and in some of the best—you will find a domestic organism described as though it existed in a vacuum, or in the Sahara, or between heaven and earth; as though it reacted on nothing and was reacted on by nothing; and as though it could be adequately rendered without reference to anything exterior to itself. How can such novels satisfy a reader who has acquired or wants to acquire the faculty of seeing life?

## V

The net result of the interplay of instincts and influences which determine the existence of a community is shown in the general expression on the faces of the people. This is an index which cannot lie and cannot be gainsaid. It is fairly easy, and extremely interesting, to decipher. It is so open, shameless, and universal that not to look at it is impossible. Yet the majority of persons fail to see it. We hear of inquirers standing on London Bridge and counting the number of motor-buses, foot-passengers, lorries, and white horses that pass over the bridge in an hour. But we never hear of anybody counting the number of faces, happy or unhappy, honest or rascally, shrewd or ingenuous, kind or cruel, that pass over the bridge. Perhaps the public may be surprised to hear that the general expression on the faces of Londoners of all ranks varies from the sad to the morose; and that their general mien is one of haste and gloomy preoccupation. Such a staring face is paramount in sociological evidence. And the observer of it would be justified in summoning Heaven, the legislature, the county council, the churches, and the ruling classes, and saying to them: "Glance at these faces, and don't boast too much about what you have accomplished. The climate and the industrial system have so far triumphed over you all."

## VI

When we come to the observing of the individual—to which all human observing does finally come if there is any right reason in it—the aforesaid general considerations ought to be ever present in the hinterland of the consciousness, aiding and influencing, perhaps vaguely, perhaps almost imperceptibly, the formation of judgments. If they do nothing else, they will at any rate accustom the observer to the highly important idea of the correlation of all phenomena. Especially in England a haphazard particularity is the chief vitiating element in the operations of the mind.

In estimating the individual we are apt not only to forget his environ-

ment, but—really strange!—to ignore much of the evidence visible in the individual himself. The inexperienced and ardent observer will, for example, be astonishingly blind to everything in an individual except his face. Telling himself that the face must be the reflection of the soul, and that every thought and emotion leaves inevitably its mark there, he will concentrate on the face, singling it out as a phenomenon apart and self-complete. Were he a god and infallible, he could no doubt learn the whole truth from the face. But he is bound to fall into errors, and by limiting the field of vision he minimises the opportunity for correction. The face is, after all, quite a small part of the individual's physical organism. An Englishman will look at a woman's face and say she is a beautiful woman or a plain woman. But a woman may have a plain face, and yet by her form be entitled to be called beautiful, and (perhaps) *vice versa*. It is true that the face is the reflection of the soul. It is equally true that the carriage and gestures are the reflection of the soul. Had one eyes, the tying of a bootlace is the reflection of the soul. One piece of evidence can be used to correct every other piece of evidence. A refined face may be refuted by clumsy finger-ends; the eyes may contradict the voice; the gait may nullify the smile. None of the phenomena which every individual carelessly and brazenly displays in every motor-bus terrorising the streets of London is meaningless or negligible.

Again, in observing we are generally guilty of that particularity which results from sluggishness of the imagination. We may see the phenomenon at the moment of looking at it, but we particularise in that moment, making no effort to conceive what the phenomenon is likely to be at other moments.

For example, a male human creature wakes up in the morning and rises with reluctance. Being a big man, and existing with his wife and children in a very confined space, he has to adapt himself to his environment as he goes through the various functions incident to preparing for his day's work. He is just like you or me. He wants his breakfast, he very much wants to know where his boots are, and he has the usually sinister preoccupations about health and finance. Whatever the force of his egoism, he must more or less harmonise his individuality with those of his wife and children. Having laid down the law, or accepted it, he sets forth to his daily duties, just a fraction of a minute late. He arrives at his office, resumes life with his colleagues sympathetic and antipathetic, and then leaves the office for an expedition extending over several hours. In the course of his expedition he encounters the corpse of a young dog run down by a motor-bus. Now you also have encountered that corpse and are gazing at it; and what do you say to yourself when he comes along? You say: "Oh! Here's a policeman." For he happens to be a policeman. You stare at him, and you never see anything but a policeman—an indivisible phenomenon of blue cloth, steel buttons, flesh resembling a face, and a helmet; "a stalwart guardian of the law"; to you little more human than an algebraic symbol: in a word—a policeman.

Only, that word actually conveys almost nothing to you of the reality

which it stands for. You are satisfied with it as you are satisfied with the description of a disease. A friend tells you his eyesight is failing. You sympathise. "What is it?" you ask. "Glaucoma." "Ah! Glaucoma!" You don't know what glaucoma is. You are no wiser than you were before. But you are content. A name has contented you. Similarly the name of policeman contented you, seems to absolve you from further curiosity as to the phenomenon. You have looked at tens of thousands of policemen, and perhaps never seen the hundredth part of the reality of a single one. Your imagination has not truly worked on the phenomenon.

There may be some excuse for not seeing the reality of a policeman, because a uniform is always a thick veil. But you—I mean you, I, any of us—are oddly dim-sighted also in regard to the civil population. For instance, we get into the empty motor-bus as it leaves the scene of the street accident, and examine the men and women who gradually fill it. Probably we vaunt ourselves as being interested in the spectacle of life. All the persons in the motor-bus have come out of a past and are moving towards a future. But how often does our imagination put itself to the trouble of realising this? We may observe with some care, yet owing to a fundamental defect of attitude we are observing not the human individuals, but a peculiar race of beings who pass their whole lives in motor-buses, who exist only in motor-buses and only in the present! No human phenomenon is adequately seen until the imagination has placed it back into its past and forward into its future. And this is the final process of observation of the individual.

## VII

Seeing life, as I have tried to show, does not begin with seeing the individual. Neither does it end with seeing the individual. Particular and unsystematised observation cannot go on for ever, aimless, formless. Just as individuals are singled out from systems, in the earlier process of observation, so in the later processes individuals will be formed into new groups, which formation will depend upon the personal bent of the observer. The predominant interests of the observer will ultimately direct his observing activities to their own advantage. If he is excited by the phenomena of organisation—as I happen to be—he will see individuals in new groups that are the result of organisation, and will insist on the variations from type due to that grouping. If he is convinced—as numbers of people appear to be—that society is just now in an extremely critical pass, and that if something mysterious is not forthwith done the structure of it will crumble to atoms—he will see mankind grouped under the different reforms which, according to him, the human dilemma demands. And so on! These tendencies, while they should not be resisted too much, since they give character to observation and redeem it from the frigidity of mechanics, should be resisted to a certain extent. For, whatever they may be, they favour the growth of sentimentality, the protean and indescribably subtle enemy of common sense.

## YOUNG WRITER REMEMBERING CHICAGO

*Albert Halper (1934)*

## I. FALL

STARK days these. Stark nights too. In the parks the trees stand firm, the bare boughs creaking in the wind. The gravel paths, clean from many rains, are neat against the dead brown of faded grass. The wind blows, the leaves fall, and smoke rolls up from factories.

Through the South Side the trains come in at night, long gray metal monsters, racing from off the plains, thundering over viaducts, small squares of light glittering from their windowed steel bodies.

And mist hangs over the lake, drifting to the shore. Tugs creep up the river like water beetles, blunt-nosed, going under bridges, chugging. Fog hangs over the Loop all night. The empty iron streets are gray and dead.

Rearing themselves in the morning, big buildings go up, the steel framework clear against a dirty sky. The chatter of pneumatic hammers, the coarse casual language of men who earn two dollars an hour and like hot beans, drop from the height, but never reach the street.

The nights are blue and chill, with foggy air to breathe. The Elevated goes west, south, north, spanning the miles, returning to the Loop, the crowded Loop, where big buildings stand lank, showing their thin sides, their flat buttocks. Cool shadows fall against the walls and the bricks are pressed down hard for strength.

Well, what about the town, what about the Windy City, the tough burg with the bad reputation? What about Chicago in the fall? Who knows Chicago? There's no wind. No answer.

A sprawl of shacks nibbling at the prairie, then came the smokestacks and the noise. A blare, a crash, and the hum of turbines all day long.

Fall comes, the hurly-burly season, the windy-shrieking season. The freights roll in from Texas, loaded to the doors with fat steers who stamp upon the flooring, rubbing sides, grunting in the swaying, roaring trains. Everything comes into Chicago. The long-legged cowboys in charge of the cattle, lads who are fond of plug tobacco, walk through the Loop on high-heeled boots, see the classy legs on Michigan Avenue, feel their bluish chins, and swallow. Oh, you Panhandle boys, how do you like the Windy City? What do you think of the big, noisy town?

And after harvest the farm boys come in, big lanky fellers in overalls, with wide mouths and great brown hands, all eager to bite into Chicago, all hoping to get a job. They walk south along State Street, reach Harrison, stare at the photos in front of the cheap burlesque shows, see the penny arcades, pimps standing in the doorways. They walk slowly under the lamps at night. Chicago has enough women to go around, women whose job it is to make big

dames with loose breasts. The cops say nothing, look the other way, twirl their clubs, and think about getting on the day shift.

Oh, you farm boys, what do you think of the tough town by the lake? Corn sways when the wind blows over the prairie, but the wind in Chicago howls down the street; it howls over the rooftops of factories and office buildings; and during lunch hour the young fellers stand on the corners with toothpicks in their mouths and watch the girls waiting for the traffic signal, watch the wind act naughty-naughty. Why go to a burlesque show, folks, when you live in the Windy City? Why? You see, my friends, I am a booster for Chicago. I want my town to become the biggest in the land.

And now, folks, my own people, let me tell you my story. I was born on the West Side, near the Northeastern tracks; there were factories and big livery stables in the neighborhood. My old man ran a grocery and once a week I sprinkled sawdust on the floor, throwing out the grains like golden seeds. That was before the chain-stores were popular, that was a long time ago. In those days my old man carried a lot of book-trade customers who paid every Saturday; but if the wage-earner of the family came home drunk, why of course my old man had to wait until the next Saturday. He marked down the items in his big book, then marked them in duplicate in the customer's. Everybody was satisfied; it was fair enough, fair enough.

I remember the Polish janitress who lived on Lake Street near St. John's Place. She bought a half-dozen rolls every morning; she used to pinch my cheeks and feel my buttocks and say it was too bad I was only nine years old. I remember she had a rosy face and dark eyes and was always walking fast, always out of breath. Her husband was a plumber's helper; he was tall and skinny and had the piles. One day she ran away with a husky shipping clerk.

We kids used to make fun of Lumpy Louie, the old cracked gent who had three bumps on his head that looked like three small eggs. He used to stand in front of the wooden Indian in front of Sutton's candy store, arguing and lifting his cane at it; sometimes he scolded the Indian for not keeping his appointment the evening before. He would rap the fire-plugs sharply too and grow angry, and once in a while, when we hit him in the back with stones, he cried.

I used to go swimming in Union Park, in the old lagoon with the cement bottom, that bottom that got slippery because the water wasn't changed often enough. There was a stone bridge over the neck of the pond and people used to toss pennies down into the water on Saturday afternoons and we dived for them. There was quite a scramble. When we got a few we stuck them in our mouths, took a breath and dived for some more. One day a husky girl, a good diver, pushed us little fellers aside and got almost all the pennies. I remember she didn't wear a bathing suit, but an old dirty suit of clinging underwear; she was about twelve years old. We ducked her and kicked her, but she wouldn't go away, and the men on the bridge tossed pennies near her all the time.

George Hurrel, the kid who turned out to be an artist, the short, strong kid who was always drawing pictures on the sidewalk, was my buddy. Every night we went up the alley, crept near the rear window of Healy's, and looked into the back room. The window had a coat of black paint, but there were a few scratches that allowed us to see fairly well. We saw two women showing a few men a good time, and though the men changed from night to night, the women were always the same ones—the tall stout one and the one with black hair; they sat on the laps of the men, squeezed the boys hard, and made them dance to the tune of the old mechanical piano. We watched them drinking, saw old hunch-backed Paddy Curley bring in the bottles, and when the women started smoking our eyes popped. That was the first time I had ever seen ladies smoke, that was when I was a kid. Sometimes the dancing looked like wrestling; and when I told my mother about it, she slapped my face, telling me not to go back in that alley any more.

Yes, folks, I know many stories. And once I was acquainted with a very clever fellow. He told me that if you place a chair upon a table you create a new height. The world is full of clever folk, and I'm not so bad myself. Only I am too modest, I am not aggressive enough.

I go away to a town, a big strange town, and try to hammer out a good book. The days come, the days go, and big ships sail into the harbor. . . .

Speed is in the wind, all right, but the world rolls dead and heavy. Here in this Manhattan rooming-house, a thousand miles from home, it's hell to stare at brown bare walls, with your money almost gone. The place is chilly, and two limp towels hang from a rod. My arms are heavy, I've got the blues; there's a locomotive in my chest, and that's a fact.

Rain falls upon the asphalt and in Central Park the rocks are wet. Autos hurry over bridges, skimming along, while cops swear, mud is dashed onto the sidewalk, and a guy doesn't feel heroic when he gets some in the eye.

"For every shout upon the mountain top there's a million miles of wailing wind." This is from the book of Success, from the wide open door of Opportunity. Panes of glass rattle in their sockets, a roomer from the third floor goes tramping down the stairs, turns the knob, and slams the door, while outside the street lamps throw their cold white glare.

## II. WINTER

In the winter all things do not die. The waves leap up along a cold shore and the wind blows hard. The gulls band in flocks, swerving, wheeling to the right, and the bright sunlight glances from their bellies.

Oh, the iron streets are cold, cold. The raw wind whistles over buildings, rattles the laundry signs, swirls the snow into high drifts in the alleys, and long, blue sparks fly from the third rail as the Elevated goes over the frosty tracks.

Jake Bowers, coming from down-state, walks along Madison Street, stands

on the corner of Clinton, takes his hands from his pockets and begins blowing on his fists. Jake is broke. His overalls are getting frayed, his hair is long, and he's getting thin. He shuffles in the cold, bucks the wind, thinks about the big wheat-cakes he has eaten all summer, thinks about the farmer's big stout wife, and when he reaches the Salvation Army headquarters his mind is warm all right, but his legs are like wood. He sees the long line of broken men, all anxious to get a bed, and, when he blows on his fists again, his chapped lips split open in several places and he begins sucking the blood coming from the cracks.

When the wind blows over the prairie, the cornstalks make a dry rustling sound, but in Chicago the wind whistles through your pants and you shiver plenty. Ask Jake Bowers, the tall, lanky boy from down-state. Hey, Jake, how do you like Chicago? Tell the folks about it. Jake doesn't answer; he wets his dry, cracked lips, stands in line with the others, and thinks about a bed for the night.

At dawn the day breaks, the cold, dark sky cracks slowly. Now the iron streets are noisy, the trucks pound hard, teamsters swing their heavy whips through the frosty air, and long columns of vapor come from the nostrils of the horses.

Hey, hey, my buckos. Go on, you bastards. Drag your loads, pull them through the streets, pull them along the shiny car tracks. At night I'll turn you toward the barn, I'll give you hay and water, I'll whack your steamy rumps. Hey, hey, my buckos. Go on, you big fat bastards.

And the long whips swing through the frosty air while the Elevated booms by overhead. The rear legs of the horse bulge with strength.

When I was a small kid, only a few autos were on the streets. I saw the big horses leaning forward, pulling; I heard the swearing teamsters swaying on their seats. Racehorses are nice to look at and pretty nice to write about, but what of the brutes who pull heavy loads, what of the animals that fall and break their legs on slippery streets, kicking weakly until a cop comes running with a gun in his hand? Hey, hey, my buckos. What about those poor bastards, pulling?

At noon the cracked sky is wide open. Small-faced flappers hurry in the cold, their long thin legs moving very fast. They head for the drug-stores, the long narrow stores lined with high stools. They crowd at the counters where prim sandwiches are sold, nicely decorated, good stuff to nibble at with small teeth. Some gals smoke now, swing their legs, and eye the soda-jerker, a tall slick lad with a turned-up shiny nose. The gals look from the windows, hoping for a rich feller, hoping the boss won't have too many letters to dictate.

I once worked in a factory. There were punch-presses near the wall. One noon I sat talking to a man who spoke broken English, but had good jaws. It was snowing outside and we watched the big flakes floating down. Next to me another fellow, a big Swede, yawned, closed his mouth slowly, sighted at the factory cat like at a target, then spat a good stream of rich brown

tobacco juice. The cat was white. But it was half brown as it sprang away. The Swede did not laugh; he yawned again, hoping the snow would stop at half past five.

And I once had a job as order-picker for a mail-order house, my first job after graduating from high school, when I was eager to conquer the world, to advance with the times, as it were. I went along aisles of merchandise and picked the orders, reading the sheets sent in by customers from Arkansas and Minnesota. There were many items to pick, cheap work shirts, rubber collars, corduroy pants, fedora hats that the firm picked up at auction. I used to stand in the aisles when the supervisor wasn't looking and read the letters accompanying the orders. Some of the customers couldn't spell properly; they had scrawly handwriting and wrote in the personal vein; they told the firm that the last pair of pants was a bit too small for Tom—Tom liked more room around the seat. Yes, folks, those were the days. Another fellow worked with me, a huge Hollander, and his name was Big Bill Mesland; he had to leave Holland because of a girl there. Big Bill was fiery when the boss was not around, but as soon as Kerton walked by, Bill became meek in manner. He used to coax the packing girls into the darker aisles, and none of them hollered very much. And at Christmas, when the orders grew heavy, when we had to work overtime until our eyes were so red we could hardly read the customers' writing, Big Bill cursed the firm, standing in the aisle. He shot off all the high-pressure oratory at his command. And one night, a clear starry night, as the poets say, after we had checked out, he and I walked toward the carline and at the corner Bill wheeled around, raised his big fist in the air, and cursed the building behind us, cursed it in his broken English. I laughed at him. But one year later, while I was working at another job, I heard that the firm of Philipsborn had gone bankrupt. Well, maybe Bill was a medicine man after all. Who knows? He went away to California and wrote me a letter, but I didn't answer it and I don't know why.

And I once had another good friend, but he left town, left his job at the Post Office and is now working as a seaman; he once wrote me from Brussels. Before he left, he told me this: he said big hills are not small mountains. We had a long argument, but I don't recall who won. I told him he was a fathead, called him a mystic; but now I'm beginning to understand what he meant.

The point is, never go to New York, my friends. Stick in Chicago where you belong. They say New York is a great town, that it's the greatest thing in America; but that's all a lie, and a bloody lie at that.

Let the subways roar on, let them rumble underground, let the big boats sail into the harbor bringing freight and people. But the wide mouth of the continent can swallow it whole for all I care. Folks, if you'll please step closer, I'll tell you something; I want to tell you that New York is just a big small town, a burg full of suckers, swollen with yokels. Dear old Manhattan, sweet Papa Knickerbocker. Eighty black years on you and yours.

But now it's winter, good old winter in Chicago. The wind howls and



snow is whirled into drifts back in the alleys. A strong boat goes up the Chicago River, breaking the ice, keeping the way clear. And every Saturday afternoon races are held in the parks, the bands play on platforms, a few cops on skates keep the crowds back, and sometimes the favorite falls on the last lap and the people feel sorry for him. The wide oval pond glitters dully under the sun and the wind blows fine snow over the ice. People stamp to keep warm, some slap their sides. . . .

Here in New York the gusts blow in from the Battery; and sirens howl, and the bells of the Greek Catholic church over on Twelfth Street go bong-bong-bong all day long. When the air grows raw and damp here, the keys of my typewriter stick a little and I have to pound a bit harder; so hard in fact that some folks will say, "Too raw and awkward, too unfinished and slangy."

But I was born in a raw, slangy city, in a raw, slangy neighborhood. I lived near railroads, and on warm nights I could smell the strong odor from the stockyards rolling in heavy waves all the way from the South Side. Just try to write in the classic tradition with that stink in your nostrils, sit down and spin out smooth poetic sentences with the roar of railroads in your ears.

When I was a kid I saw sluggers pull down teamsters from the seats of wagons during the big strikes. I watched the bloody brawls at the polls at election time, and some of my old buddies are now successful gangsters. I was an errand-boy working after school when the race riots broke out on the South Side, and, coming from a home where I had just delivered a package, I saw five whites chasing a Negro up the street. The Negro was howling, waving his arms. He ran so hard his shirt worked loose from his pants and flapped in the summer wind. They chased him up an alley off Indiana Avenue, cornered him near a shed, and one white kicked the coon in the mouth as the dark boy got down on his knees to beg for mercy. The nigger begged hard. He said he had never done harm to any white man; he howled and then stopped, and for a while it looked as if he was trying to swallow his own lips. That was when one of the whites pulled out a gun, a shiny revolver that caught the sun. It took two shots to finish the business. The whites stood grim. The coon, his arms spread out as if nailed to a cross, lay quiet near a pile of horse manure. The whites chased me out of the alley, told me to beat it, to keep my mouth shut. Then the cops came, didn't ask me a question, and forced me to ride in the patrol wagon until we passed the danger zone. Soldiers of the National Guard stood on the corners. Many papers were sold.

I'm not a snooper. I don't go around looking for stories, but I know what I know, I know what I have seen. If I was born in a raw, slangy town, if I happened to see raw, slangy things, why shouldn't my stuff be raw, slangy?

The wind shrieks and howls, and there's no answer, folks.

And meanwhile it's winter back in Chicago. Cold air blows over the frozen lagoons, whirls thin fine snow toward the pavilion, and out on the ice a small man wearing a fur cap tries to perform fancy turns on dull skates.

And the weeks slip by, with two limp towels hanging from a rod. The windows rattle. I've got a locomotive in my chest, and that's a fact. It's a gray day, my friends, and the traffic pounds down Eighth Avenue. Across the way, level with my window, a woman sticks a mop out and shakes it hard; but she's not much to look at, no shape at all, kind of middle-aged and her hair is hidden in an old house-cap.

Now a few peeps of steam come up, thin and faint, a drawn-out whistling sound. The landlady's heart has melted; she's a good sport after all. When I become famous, in forty years or so, when I learn to write that slick tricky stuff, I'll type her a nice letter, a letter that will make her proud. "Dear Madam," I will say, and I'll say plenty of nice things. She's a tall thin old lady, and once upon a time a young writer from Kentucky beat her out of two weeks' rent. A few more peeps come up, drearily, like lost pieces of fog drifting down a river on a sunny day.

### III. SPRING

The wind blows, but it is not so cold now; its howling mood is gone, gone down that twining river which disappears into the trees. On the left bank lies a rowboat, bottom up, like a fat man's belly. The paint is peeling, small worms crawl along the seams.

The wind is warm now, a little wet too, and small buds, hanging from the branches, tremble there like heavy drops of water.

When the damp air blows over the prairie, the tall new grass nods in the breeze, but in Chicago people sniff the air, begin walking through the parks again, and a few married young fellows hit the bosses for a raise.

And it's nice to walk up a street late at night when the warm wind blows. There goes the Windy City Kid, coming from work on the night shift down at the Post Office. It's four o'clock in the morning, folks; the street is quiet. He takes his time, walks with his hands in his pockets, and when he sees a police squad whiz around the corner he pretends he's in a hurry, luring them on, smiling a little to himself. Ah, Windy City Kid, you're no greenhorn; you know your onions. The police car bears down, swings over toward the curb, the cops leaning out. And then they call, "Halt!" The Windy City Kid halts; he recognizes the voice of authority. He stands firm but feels frisky, and has a mocking look around the eyes. The cops get out heavily, slap his body to feel for weapons; maybe he's a dangerous guy; they question him, tell him to talk up, threaten to run him in. But the Windy City Kid holds a trump card; he works nights, sleeps days, and he's got to have his little joke now and then. When the cops grow ugly he pulls out his government Post Office badge, flashes it under their noses, tells them he works on the night shift, dares them to call up the supervisor if they doubt it. The cops swear. They get into their auto and drive away. And the Windy City Kid stands on the curb grinning. He calls himself a crazy nut, but he feels pretty good.

Then he resumes walking up the dark, silent street toward home. He has turned this trick a few times; he works nights; he's got to have his little joke once in a while.

And so spring comes to Chicago. The lake boats sail away like ocean liners, cruise a few hundred miles along Lake Michigan and bring back a load. Smoke trails them, hangs in the air, follows them over the water, and on clear days the horizon seems as boundless as the open sea.

And the warm wind blows, whirling dust along the street, into the public's eyes, into the eyes of those young fellers who stand on the corners during lunch hour, chewing on their toothpicks and looking for a free show.

Yes, folks, it's spring. The curbs along Madison are lined with men, husky fellers and broken geezers. It's spring and they also taste the warm wind. They stand east of Halsted Street, where the cheap employment agencies, with their signs posted outside, are doing a big business. Men are wanted, big raw fellers for the railroad gangs, men for road building, men to go north to the lumber mills. Forty dollars a month, board free. Well, bohunks, what do you say? Come on, what do you say? Take it or leave it. Hey, you, the big guy with the high shoulders, do you want a job? Your fists are big, you've got small, angry eyes; maybe you've had a tough time this winter, eh? Want a job, want work? Here we are, forty bucks a month up north in the camps, or forty-five with the road gang. Hey, bohunks, what do you say? Hurry, hurry, hurry, men; the train pulls out when the sun stands in the sky like a fried egg on high.

But Jake Bowers from down-state says nothing. There he stands, his eyes half-sunken, pretty thin now, his country color gone, his big brown hands a dirty white. Hey, Jake, what do you think of Chicago? Tell the folks about it. Send your story singing against the wind. The breeze blows gently over the prairie, but in Chicago a man's got to think about a job. Hey, Jake, how about a job up north? Forty bucks a month and cheap booze every other Saturday. How about it? Jake says nothing. He stands lank, shoves his hands in his pockets, then shuffles away. Jake wants to go back home on the farm. Jake wants his wheat-cakes every morning and the sight of the farmer's tall stout wife. Jake wants to go home. He has had a tough winter; the raw lake wind has whistled through his pants for a long time. Now he wants to go back to the soil. He has been going to a quack doctor, trying to get cured of a dose, and he wants to go back awfully bad.

Spring comes. The brisk wind flaps the colored signs of the employment agencies, and the men walk by. Merchants wash their windows, advertise bargains, hire extra clerks, and stand behind the counters waiting for business.

Oh, blow, wind, go on blowing. Whistle through their Danish whiskers, blow the black smoke away from factories, sweep it out upon the lake.

The hard spring rains go drumming down the street, and wooden men and women go walking on their wooden feet. The water gurgles in the gutters, and on the corner the fat cop mutters.

And this is what I say, yes, this is what I say:

If you have seen pigeons wheeling in the sky, if you have looked at heavy sunlight warming the naked branches of trees, if all the sounds of a city merge, swelling into one great tone, if after you come back to your room, that room with the two towels hanging from a rod, if after all this has come about and you sit on your chair, your arms heavy, the keys of the typewriter staring at you—if you've gone as far as this, I want to tell you that in the winter all things do not die, but death takes many things in the spring. I want to tell you that if warm wind is sticky with new life, it also suffocates the old. It drives the young writers home, the brave boys, the heroic lads with epics in their chests, who came to New York. The young lads pack their grips, pay the landladies, take the subway to the station, and stand waiting for their trains. Youth does not always win; it rides homes and tells the folks nothing, gets a job and lets the days go by.

Spring comes. The wharves along the coast lose their hard lines. Ferry-boats plow away like dumpy washer-women, and the heights of Jersey City are blue-gray in the distance. But the hard shiny railroad tracks go grinning west, mile after mile. The tank towns and the jerkwater towns, the junctions and the sidings blur, while the locomotive, like a bullet in a groove, whistles along the rails.

Folks, please listen. Once upon a time I thought that sincerity and simplicity were all that mattered, that if a young writer was honest and had a little talent, that was enough. In my high-school days our composition teacher, a tall strong woman of Scotch descent, was always talking to us of honesty. That's how I got a bum steer, that's how I learned outdated stuff. Like all young fools who lived away from the racket of Manhattan, I thought the wise men of the East were a noble group, and with my sweat I brought them every gift I had. When I crept up to the manger, there was no pure or holy thing in sight; the feed trough was overturned and the wise boys were slapping down cards, a poker game was going strong. "It's a tough racket," one of them said. "War novels are going good this season, but I'll place a few chips on mystery books for the spring."

In the Sahara there's a sand storm, and in Chicago Hymie Katz gets taken for a ride for squealing on his pals. Women in back yards hang clothes out to dry and old man Sutton thinks about painting his wooden Indian.

I do not believe in heroes. I do not believe in valorous deeds. But why must death take so many things in the spring, why must the young grow weak fighting the old? The walls of New York are high and thick, and many lads have fired their loads of buckshot at them. Out of the West they come, up from the South; but they all go back, they all go back to where they belong.

And upon the upturned manger the wise men of the East slap their cards down. One guy moves a small pile of chips and another spits into the hay.

Roar, New York, keep on roaring. Some day I'll write a book that'll interrupt the poker game—a big raw, slangy piece of work that'll set the chips to

flying. So roar, New York, go on and roar. Your rumbling dies over the harbor, fades away in Brooklyn, disappears in Astoria.

And all the while the wind blows toward Chicago. People come home from work and eat big meals; roast beef and fried potatoes are washed down with strong coffee. Eat, Chicago, sock it in your belly. You'll need plenty of meat, lots of coffee in the spring.

For in the winter all things do not die, but death takes many things in the spring.

#### IV. SUMMER

Now the days are hot, the sunlight is intense. Heat quivers upward from the asphalt in crinkly lines. The tin roofs of garages glitter in the light. When the sun goes down, women take their clothes from the lines and the windows in the east are blood-red. The streetcars during late rush hours are jammed to the doors, boxcars for human freight, swaying packing cases made of steel and glass.

The days are hot in Chicago, even though a breeze blows off the lake. The green grass in the parks is short and thick, and oars dip slowly as the rowboats go along.

And every evening pop-corn venders take their stands near the parks, draw their small white wagons toward the curb, and send their little whistling sounds into the hot dark night. Pop, kernels, keep on popping. The Greek puts another scoop of kernels over the gas-flame, gazes at it vaguely, shakes the pan a bit, then begins twisting his big mustaches very slowly.

Folks, did you ever go strolling with a gal through the park? Did you ever stop with her at the curb, hand the Greek a nickel, sit on the bench under those thickly set bushes where it was dark, and have your girl shake small handfuls of pop-corn and give them to you? When the bag was empty, you blew it up, then smashed it with your fist; there was a great noise. Your girl laughed. She gave you a shove, and when you kissed her you tasted the butter from the pop-corn on her lips. The night was dark, brethren, and warm.

Oh, pop, kernels, keep on popping. Pop in the summer for dear old Chicago.

And there's outdoor public dancing in the West Side parks. Workmen have laid a cement floor and built a little platform, and a small peppy orchestra spurts hot music. Hey, hey, sister, let's go.

And around the wire enclosure stand the middle-aged men, eyeing the young gals dancing, those fifteen- and sixteen-year-old gals. The middle-aged men have their cars parked a short distance away, those men who take the kids for long rides past the city limits, those men who know their onions. Yes, folks, such is life in a big city. Lift your glass and drain it down, the sour with the sweet, the good with the not-so-good.

And a few yards away from the dance floor boys and girls get together, hold hands as they sit on benches, make a little progress in the humanities.

Then they walk along empty streets, thinking things over. Insects swarm about the arc lamps. And they reach her home.

"Farewell, farewell," he tells her mournfully.

"Good night, good night," she answers softly, then climbs the stairs, going around the back way, tells the little doggie not to bark, not even to make a squeal, then up to her room to undress, takes off her clothes, gazes at herself in the cracked mirror, feeling her breasts meanwhile, and so to bed, alone.

Yes, folks, that's the way things go in the summer, in the good old summertime.

When I was a kid band-concerts were held in Union Park. That was when Flo Jacobson had a reputation as a sweet singer, that was when music publishers hired her to plug their numbers at the concerts. She wore a big white floppy hat, stood on the platform, and sang the new songs. I copped a handful of navy beans from the store when my father wasn't looking, and at the concert George Hurrel and I tossed the beans at the band, aiming for the brass instruments. When the music was soft you could hear those hard navy beans hit the cornets and trombones, then go rattling to the wooden floor. One night a cop caught us, but that's another story, and a long sad one at that.

Oh, grow, navy beans, keep on growing. Grow hard and firm for dear old Chicago.

And one summer I worked nights in the Post Office, that great gray building wherein are many stories. I sweated with the others, tossed mail hour on hour, my body swaying, my arms moving, my mind going dead, my eyes reading the addresses. We were supposed to sort fifty letters a minute. Figure that out, folks. I must have tossed a few billion while I was there, and where those letters went I did not care, and if the letters had black borders, if they carried sad news, I didn't care either; I kept on tossing them into the small squares. It was some job, and it taught me plenty. It taught me how to stand on one spot until the bell rang. There were long lines of mail-cases and a thousand men on the floor, and the hard chatter of over a hundred canceling machines went on all night. Who knows big business? Who knows all the big mail-order firms, those houses that dump loads and loads of mail into the Post Office? The belts rumbled on, carrying the mail away, and merchandise rattled down the chutes. Some music, folks, a symphony in the blues: the Negroes humming as they tossed the mail, the sweat rolling down their faces, the dust whirling under the lights. Can a man dance standing still? He can. He can if he's a Negro, if he's throwing mail down at the Post Office. He stands at the case, hums and sways, and pretty soon it's dancing.

Oh, dance, dark boys, go on dancing. Dance on the night shift for dear old Chicago.

The windows were opened, but no wind came inside. At eleven o'clock we ate, went across the street for a big hamburger on rye, told the Greek to hurry up, folded the bread over a big slice of onion, then sank our fangs into onion, hamburger, and bread. The cashier, an old guy with three teeth in his

mouth, grinned at us, showing his caved-in gums. "Is the meat juicy, is the onion strong enough?" he asked.

Ha-ha. Folks, I have to laugh when I remember that old boy, that ancient guy who sat behind the register grinning at us, no hair on his head. That was a long time ago, that was a thousand years ago. We left the lunchroom, crossed the street again, sat on the wide stone stairs at the Jackson Boulevard entrance, and felt the hot wind blowing up the street. We wore short aprons to protect our clothes, and Christ knows why; they flapped in the hot wind. We waved at autos going by, whistled to a few whores coming from the cheap hotel on Clark Street, and smoked a cigarette or two. There we sat on the cool stone stairs, whites, Negroes, and Filipinos, all in the same boat, our hands moist, our shirts sticking to our backs, all waiting for the bell to ring. And it rang. It rang on time too. We dribbled through the small doorway, showed our badges to the watchman, checked in again at the desk, got another tray of mail, and our arms began tossing letters again. We worked up a swaying movement. Our legs, restless at first, grew steady, and our arms seemed to flow on forever. And under the lights, those strong glaring bulbs, the dust from the dirty mail-sacks whirled in the air.

Yes, folks, I've held down some mighty fine jobs; you've got to hand it to me.

I once worked for an electrotype foundry, stood in the office checking cuts, making out statements. When work was slack, I went into the shop, near the big twin dynamos where I could hear the whir of power, the deep hum of current. Back in the rear the hydraulic presses were making wax molds for printing plates, and up in front, along the windows, the air hammers were smoothening out the casts. The gang of workmen were a swell bunch. I worked in the office, wore a white collar, but they treated me as an equal. Sometimes we talked about baseball. But back in the rear was a man who didn't give a hang about the game. He stood over the pots of boiling lead, pouring the hot liquid upon the copper shells. He was Pete the caster, and he had hair on his chest. All the men liked him; they called him the bloody barstard. Pete was blind on one side, he had only one eye, but that optic was so sharp that few men would sit down with him at a game of cards during lunch hour. And you couldn't blame them. He was lucky in cards and love, a tall lean man with wide shoulders, and there was hair on his chest. Every Saturday he got shaved at the lady barber's around the corner, the shop near Polk Street.

And he always sat in Kitty's chair. She was the first barber, the big stout one, the one whose hair was dyed so red it knocked your eye out. She shaved Pete. She swung the chair back, and as the razor went over his face her big breasts nuzzled his shoulder. Every Monday morning Pete told me about it. He was a married man, had grown children, but he worked mighty hard and had to have a change once in a while. He stood half-naked over the pots, and the muscles stood out on his lean powerful arms.

And in the office were three bosses, men who fought among themselves. One was a woman-hound, he used to tell me dirty stories and watch me narrowly; another was impotent; and the third was absent-minded and had five grown daughters. This third one looked over my shoulder as I stood checking the cuts, to make sure I wasn't making mistakes.

And that's not all the jobs I've had.

I was a salesman representing a Southern tobacco house, doing pioneer work, as it were. I sold a brand of chewing tobacco that the public didn't want to buy, a brand I pushed onto the dealers. When I came around to take reorders, I was thrown out of the stores. The plug tobacco tasted like sour apples mixed with dried oatmeal. I tried it once just for fun; that was the time I went into a candy store run by a widow. She dared me to chew it, and I told her the Irish never say die. We had a good laugh together.

And I was once a salesman for a house selling beauty parlor supplies. Cripes, what a racket. Plenty life, plenty hot stuff in that game, folks. I sold supplies to the little manicure gals, to the hair-dressers, the big stout women who had tasted everything in life there was to be tasted, who had been married three or four times and were still game, who were good sports for all that. In those days I knew all about mud-packs, astringent lotions, permanent waves, and skin rejuvenator. In those days I met a hair-dresser, a handsome German girl whose father ran a farm in Iowa. She lived in a strict rooming-house and had to meet me on the corner. Sometimes I think she was the finest kid I ever knew. Her name was Thelma.

That was a long time ago. . . .

Folks, I'm going strong, mighty strong indeed. I'd like to tell you more, like to go on forever. But here we are in Chicago and it's summer. The heat is terrific. When a gal dances with you, her dress sticks to her back. And the small excursion boats ply between Navy Pier and Lincoln Park, twenty-five cents one way, a half a dollar up and back. Hurry, hurry, hurry, folks, the big steamer leaves in three minutes, takes you out upon the ample bosom of the lake. Kids free, madam; take 'em along. The sea air is good for their tummies; it's good for their constitutions, too.

If you stand on the Pier, you hear the dinky orchestra playing as the whistle blows, you hear the banjos strummin', the darkies hummin', and once I saw a nigger gal shake her Swedish movement to get the customers on board. Then another boat docks, more playin', and the whistle blows, the boat plows away, short and heavy, toward the breakwater, and a few more Chicago souls are made happy.

Oh, sail, boats, sail away. Sail out upon the lake and buck the wind. Let the dinky music hit the water sharply with a sweet smack, sail away for dear old Chicago. . . .

And what about Jake Bowers, you say, the farm boy from down-state? Well, Jake went home, got his old job back, now eats big wheat-cakes and gazes at the farmer's fat wife, but his stare is rather empty. Hey, Jake, how



did you like Chicago? Tell the folks about it, tell them how you stood in line waiting for a bed while the wind went whistling through your pants. Go on, Jake, tell the folks. Jake doesn't answer. He shoves his plate away, gets up, walks behind the barn, and gulps down a pink pill. He has to take two pills a day, that's what the quack doctor back in Chicago said, the doc who has his office in back of the dental parlors.

And the summer wind tosses the new corn playfully about, bends it slightly so that it curves golden in the sun, but in Chicago the wind is damn hot and folks walk up the street wiping their faces.

Well, folks, I won't keep you any longer. I am sorry, very sorry that my time is up. I've got a lot more to say, many stories to tell, but there's no time, and so I'm sorry. Believe me, I am sorry.

I am sorry for many things in life. I am sorry for the small folk who live thin twisted lives, who have to hold onto their jobs and look alive when the big chief passes by. I am sorry for the broken men who stand against buildings when the wind howls down the street and the snow whirls past the arc lamps. I am sorry for the clerks working in big stockrooms, for all my old buddies down at the Post Office—the whites, the Negroes, and the Filipinos, who stand hour on hour tossing mail, their armpits stinking, going to the warehouses every payday, walking down the stairs after being with the girls, going slowly, thinking things over.

I tell you I am sorry for many things. I am sorry for all the dead jobs I have held, for lonely days in a big strange town, for long walks at night past the blazing signs of Broadway, for the dark side streets near the river. I am sorry too for the men who jam the burlesque houses in the afternoons, who lean forward as the girls kick their powdered legs, those girls who are always worrying about future bookings, who sing songs of happiness so loudly that big veins stand out in their necks. I tell you I am sorry. I have slept alone in a narrow bed in a small New York room many nights and have tried to think a few things out.

And now it is summer and I am sorry in the summer for many things, for those hot nights of open-air dancing that had to fade, for the fall that is coming. And for all the gray dead things in life, the things that drag themselves slowly along, I am sorry.

Folks, please listen. I would like to close this little piece with a grand flourish, with a blare of bugles, but I've got a locomotive in my chest, and that's a fact. . . .

When I was a kid, I went camping alone in the pine woods of upper Michigan. I was sixteen years old and carried a heavy pack upon my shoulder blades. Down past an old sawmill I hit a crooked trail that didn't seem to have any ending, and now all my years seem to be going down that trail. There were short bushes on either side, like the stunted lives of small folk, the branches warped and crooked, no buds showing, though it was already mid-summer

When I reached the bottom of the hill, I struck an old railroad spur that curved away, then straightened out into a direct line. The shiny steel tracks, giving off a harsh glitter in the sun, grew small and taut, meeting at the horizon; and as I began walking over the wooden ties I heard the faint sound of a train. I didn't see the locomotive for a long time, but heard it coming closer and closer. Finally it showed at the end of the tracks, a small black beetle against the horizon. I stepped off to one side to let it pass, hearing the sound increase, seeing the far-off smoke.

It whirled past me, shot around the curve, and went out of sight, but I still heard it. I can hear it yet.

*Chug-chug-chug. Chug-chug-chug.*

Listen to it.

## JOE LOUIS NEVER SMILES

*Jonathan Mitchell (1935)*

THESE people are here, 95,000 of them, because they have money. Down there on the field, men have paid \$150 and more for a pair of tickers. Twenty thousand seats were stamped "ringside," and the customers out beyond third base were bilked. They should have known that Mike Jacobs, who is running this fight, is a smart man. No one can do anything to him because he has the support of Hearst.

It feels good to have money again. Everyone in this crowd has money. The people who were swindled by Jacobs can afford it. Happy days are here again. Of course, things aren't so good, with twenty millions on relief. A man can be fired, and next morning there are ten men in line waiting for his job. But the unemployed have been around for a long time. No one can expect us to sit home and be sympathetic indefinitely.

It is a cold, clear night. The Stadium rises steeply around one-half of the field. The floodlights on its upper edge are directed on the field and the bleachers, and the Stadium itself is black except for a steady row of red exit signs. Almost the whole of the immense field is covered with chairs. Jacobs has pushed the customers so closely together that all that can be seen of them, under the floodlights, is their microscopic, bright faces. They form neat rows, divided into plots by the aisles, like commercial Dutch tulip beds. There are acres of them, shining pinkly. Men in white, with high cardboard signs in their caps, move gravely about selling pop, like gardeners. The ring is at second base, and the movie operators' metal cage, high on a pole, that you used to see at fights, is missing. The only movement comes from white tobacco smoke, rising in heavy waves. Through it you can see the American flags along the top of the Stadium, after the fashion of the opening verse of "The Star Spangled Banner."

Near at hand the crowd is a respectable, bridge-playing one. About a fifth are Negroes, more carefully dressed and more mannerly than the whites. The little drunk with the long, woolen muffler is certainly a Bronx dentist. He thinks correctly that the preliminary match now going on is poor, and keeps screaming, "Lousy." He brandishes a handful of crumpled bills, and will give odds to anyone. There seems to be something painful in his past that he would like to explain, but the woolen muffler keeps blowing in his face, and communication between him and us is eternally frustrated.

There is a stirring in the aisles near the ring. The people who amount to something, and who are bowed through the police lines outside the Stadium, are entering. There are five state Governors, the Republican National Committee, important business figures and a large number of people whose press agents made them come so that their names would be in tomorrow's papers. Max Baer and his attendants are now at home plate. A dozen little pushing figures open up the crowd for him, and another dozen follow behind. Baer wears a white bathrobe, and has his hands on the shoulders of the state trooper in front of him. He nods to his many friends. Joe Louis, with another state trooper and other attendants, pushes in from third base. We learn afterwards that his bride, Marva Trotter, is in the first row in a bright green dress and orchids. Louis seems to see no one.

The floodlights are extinguished. Nothing exists except the brightly glowing ring. That is old Joe Humphries being lifted through the ropes, the man who announced fights before the depression. Since then he has been sick, and had a bad time. We have all been having a bad time, for that matter. Jack Dempsey squats in Baer's corner, but no one notices him. Humphries' assistant is bawling into the microphones: "Although Joe Louis is colored, he is a great fighter, in the class of Jack Johnson and the giants of the past." His voice fades away, and returns: "American sportsmanship, without regard to race, creed or color, is the talk of the world. Behave like gentlemen, whoever wins." Nearly two thousand police at the entrances of the Stadium are there to break up a possible race riot.

Baer has stripped. He has made a lot of money, Baer has. From all reports, he has spent a lot. He has played Broadway, Miami and the other hot spots. Why shouldn't he have done so? Joe Louis takes off his flashing silk bathrobe, blue with a vermilion lining. It is the only extravagant gesture he makes. For all his youth, he is thick under the jaws, thick around the waist. His face is earnest, thoughtful, unsmiling.

Max Baer hasn't been, I suppose, what you would call a good boy. Joe Louis has, though. This is his greatest advantage. He once was taken to a night club, and it is reported that within ten minutes he wanted to go home. He said he was sleepy. He is supposed to have saved his money. Louis' father died when he was only two years old, down in Alabama. Until she married again, his mother had a hard struggle to support the children, and they were very dear to her. Louis is fond of his mother. She is a Lily of the Valley at

her church in Detroit, where the family now lives. The Lilies are having a supper, or some such event, in a few days. She wants him there, and he is going with his new wife.

We are too far away to hear the gong. They are out in the middle of the ring, with a stubby little man in a white sweater moving softly around them. Baer holds both hands, open, clumsily in front of him. Look at Joe Louis. He is leading with a straight left arm, his right hand before his face ready to block, and his right elbow tucked into his ribs. That is scientific. That is what they teach in correspondence courses, or the night gymnasium classes of the Y.M.C.A. In the first thirty seconds you can tell that he reeks of study, practice, study. Any romantic white person who believes that the Negro possesses a distinctive quality ought to see Louis. He suggests a gorilla or a jungle lion about as much as would an assistant professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Baer stands flatfooted, with his great death-dealing right fist doubled by his side. He swings, and you can almost count three while the fist sails through the air. Louis moves sidewise and back, because he has been taught that if you move with a blow it can never hurt you. Baer's glove slides up the side of Louis's head harmlessly. He swings again and again, and, carefully and unhurriedly, Louis slips away. Look! Louis at last is going in. A left, a right and another left in close. Louis has pulled in his head, and, with both arms up before him, he looks like a brown crayfish. All you can see is the twitching of his shoulders. So incredibly fast he is that the blows themselves are almost invisible. His hands cannot possibly move more than a few inches. Look! Baer is backing into a neutral corner. Louis is raining down blows. Baer's nose spurts blood, his lower lip bleeds, his face is red pulp.

Baer must have meant something to many people. He made wisecracks and went to parties and was a harbinger of the return of the old days. He was Broadway, he was California, and Florida; he represented the possession of money once more and spending it. This saddle-colored, dour-faced, tongue-tied, studious youth who is punishing Baer, punishing him more cruelly than human flesh and bones can endure, what does he represent? Baer stands with his hands hanging at his sides. He is helpless. He cannot hit the dissolving form before him, and he has never learned to protect himself. He holds his fine head, with its sweep of tightly curled hair and its great, brooding nose, high above his torturer. Pride alone keeps his head up, pride that has no tangible justification whatever. It was the same pride that kept Colonel Baratieri at Adowa, twenty years before Joe Louis was born.

It is the first round, and the fight is as good as over. Maybe it was foolish to spend money going to a fight. There must be many people, even down there in the ringside seats, who couldn't afford to spend what they did on tickets. No one can be sure of his job with twenty millions on relief. This is a crazy country, with people handing out a million dollars to Mike Jacobs and Hearst, while families right here in New York City are without enough to eat.

Round one is ended. Jack Dempsey vaults into the ring in a single, startling leap. Perhaps it is a trick. He must have vaulted from the ground to the edge of the ring platform, and from there into the ring itself. But from a distance, it seems one motion, and it is beautiful. Beside the man that Dempsey was, Baer and Louis and Schmeling are phonies. Nowadays everything, including men, is somehow different.

The next three rounds are slaughter. In the second, Baer makes a wild, swinging, purposeless attack. For probably fifteen seconds, he appears formidable, but his attack has no substance inside it. With the third round, he is beaten, but Louis does not rush in, as Dempsey would have, to kill. Deliberately he circles Baer, with his earnest, thoughtful face, seeking an opening through which to strike without possible risk of injury. He takes no chance of a last, desperate fling of Baer's prodigious right hand. He is a planner. He is a person who studies the basic aspects of a problem and formulates a program. Apparently his studies are satisfactory, for he carefully steps up and knocks Baer down twice. Baer is on the canvas when time is called. Dempsey slides across the ring, picks Baer up like a mother, fusses over him until the fourth, and final, round. Baer once more is down. When the stubby referee, swinging his arm, reaches seven, he tries to rouse himself. This turns out later to have been a fortunate gesture. The customers who suspected the honesty of the fight, and were unconvinced that a man could be half-killed by fifty blows full on the jaw, were reassured as they watched Baer struggling to his feet. Had he been trying to throw the fight, they reasoned, he would have lain still. At the count of ten, Baer is on one knee, his swollen face wearing a comical expression of surprise.

The floodlights return us to time and space. Near at hand, there is remarkably little cheering, even from Negroes. They act as if, despite the police, they think it more prudent to restrain their feelings. There in the ring, placing his hand on Baer's shoulder in a stiff gesture, is the best fighter living, and the first Negro whose backers and trainer are men of his race. No white man shares in Louis' winnings. If the whites of the Boxing Commission will permit the match, he will be champion of the world.

All across the Stadium, the neat tulip beds are being broken up as tiny figures push into the aisles and toward the exits. A man with a small blonde mustache is sobbing: "Maxie, why didn't you hit him?" Downtown in the Forties and Fifties, redecorated speakeasies will quickly be crammed to the doors and customers turned away. In Lenox Avenue in Harlem, Negroes will be tap-dancing from curb to curb, and singing, "The Baer goes over the mountain," and "Who won the fight?" Tomorrow the financial sections of the newspapers will report that business leaders regard the fight as final proof that the country's economic worries are past, and a comfortable and prosperous future is assured.

## THE MAN WITH A TRACTOR

*Morrow Mayo (1938)*

SANK drove into a field that was full of thistles, broom weeds, careless weeds, winter weeds, goat-heads, and blue weeds. The wind was out of the southwest and there were scattering clouds in the east and thunderheads to the north. Despite the rank vegetation, the truck left a trail of dust like a destroyer laying down a smoke screen.

At intervals he got out and bored into the red cat-claw land with a three-foot soil auger. When he unscrewed the auger he pulled the dark, moist earth out of the auger-head, sniffed it, made little balls, and threw them to the ground. He had to drive in low, and twice the truck started to boil. He headed it into the wind, cut off the motor, and let it cool.

He finished in the northwest corner of the field and stood looking out over the woolly land. It was a beautiful half-section, so level that he could see the bottom of the weeds a mile away. There was not a tree, stump, lake, or rock in it. Sank lighted a cigarette, thinking. It was a crime to let land go like that. His hands, face, clothes, shoes, and hat were the same color as the reddish dusty top-soil on which he stood. There was plenty of deep-moisture. It would not be good farming, but a man had to do many things here that he wouldn't do if conditions were different. He got into his truck and drove to the unpainted frame house which stood near the northeast corner of the field.

Sank stopped his tractor in the edge of the field, headed west. He lowered the discs of the one-way plow, socking the levers down to the last notch. He wanted to get all that stuff. In third speed, making three and one-half miles an hour, he took off. The discs cut into the earth like circle saws, throwing the soil one way. The weeds fell as soldiers sometimes fall, going up into the air and pitching forward head first, roots up.

He plowed until dark, walked to the house and ate his supper, rested a little while, and returned to the field. He turned on his lights. One bright eye gleaming on the weeds ahead, one on the plow behind, the tractor lumbered over the land, snorting fire.

It was mighty bleak out there at night. Some wit had called this country the Siberia of America, and he was righter than he knew. There is not much difference between the great wheat lands of the world: between the Siberian steppes and the Australian prairies and the Argentine pampas and the high plains of North America. It is different only in the Danubian countries. All the others are vast uplands—immense, limitless, very similar in appearance, in scenery, in vegetation; very similar nowadays, even down to tractors and implements and men. Blindfold a man, take him from a tractor on one, put him on a tractor on another, would he know the difference?

At midnight the wind shifted to the west. Going east, the dust blew over Sank; going west, the heat hit him in the face. Horses, no matter how many,

got tired eventually. The tractor did not get tired. It was 6½ feet tall, 12 feet long, and 8 feet wide. It weighed 5,300 pounds. The rubber tires on the rear wheels were larger than a woman's body. Sank never wondered what would happen if that monster got out of control, stampeded, or turned on its driver.

It was two o'clock when he stopped. He was asleep by two-thirty, up again before daylight. He plowed eighteen hours a day, and finally he was through. He raised the discs and drove to the house. It was too hot for early September. The windmill was not turning; the sky was clear. No-weather was a weather-breeder. Sank slept ten hours.

A blue norther had struck. The land to the south was a powderhouse. The thin row of young Chinese elms bent low. Sank saw a hawk wheel in the sky in the face of that wind. Across the great level pasture to the east a jackrabbit was loping easily, on four legs, on three. He ran, then coasted. The hawk folded his wings and dropped like a small black bomb tossed from an airplane. The jackrabbit was not coasting now. He was doing forty miles an hour.

The hawk struck, staggered, rose slowly with the weight, great wings flapping. High enough in the air, he opened his talons. The rabbit fell to earth, hit the hard ground, did not move. In slow, triumphant circles the hawk descended to his dinner.

Sank backed his truck into the barn and got down and closed the doors with difficulty. The wind was blowing a young gale. He backed his truck to the other end of the barn, and parked it up close to a mound of seed wheat—pure black hull wheat, strong, high in protein content, one hundred and fifty bushels of it. Near the pile of wheat Sank set up his seed wheat-treating machine.

Before he opened the half-gallon can of chemical Sank put on a gas mask. The can had a skull-and-cross-bones on it. The chemical prevented wheat from becoming infected with smut. In this country smut losses from untreated wheat sometimes run as high as fifty per cent. The fumes from that chemical will kill a man. Sank poured the thick, black, sticky liquid into the seed wheat-treating machine, started the gasoline motor, picked up a scoop, and started scooping the seed wheat into the machine. The wheat ran through the chemical, up the funnel, and poured out of the spout into the truck.

Usually Sank was just an ordinary-looking man, just an average-looking farmer, with arms and legs, a mouth and eyes, a wife and two children. Working there in that barn, the wind howling outside, in the dim half-light, with that gas mask on, and the rats scurrying around, he didn't look like a farmer. He looked like a product of a more advanced civilization. He didn't even look like a man. He looked like some horrible, sightless, anthropoidal thing with a snout.

He scooped the golden grain and it was hard work. He didn't quit until he had put it all through the machine. Then he threw down the scoop, cut off the motor, took off his gas mask, and went to the house. He noticed the thin row of young Chinese elms again. Last year the saplings had bent flat to the

ground before the force of the onslaught. This year the Chinese elms were not bowing their heads quite so low. Next year . . .

The wind had subsided as suddenly as it had struck. Sank went out and unhitched his plow, hitched the tractor to the drill, set the sprockets of the drill so that it would sow twenty pounds to the acre, and scooped the seed wheat into the drill-bins until they were level full. He oiled and watered and fueled the tractor and lubricated both tractor and drill. Then he lowered the discs, cranked the tractor, threw it into fourth speed, and took off up the edge of the plowed field, making four miles an hour, sowing wheat.

Wheat is undoubtedly the finest, most courageous thing that grows on the face of the earth. The implement drilled the seed wheat into the earth. If I were called upon to award the first prize to the best thing that grows, I should walk up and hang the gold medal over the head of a stalk of hard winter wheat. The discs made little planting furrows; the drill set down the single grains of wheat in the furrows; the drag-chains covered them over with soil. It was all mechanical. It was different from the days, from Joseph down to not so long ago, when a man dipped into a sack of seed wheat, and sowed it by hand, three scattering throws to the handful.

When Sank put the grains into the soil they were hard as rocks. Twelve hours later they were mealy. Six hours later they were sprouting. This is when the farmers say the earth is moving. Put it in a glass and you can see it grow. Twenty-four hours after Sank put the first hard grains into the soil, the brave, pale green shoots were thrusting themselves up out of the earth. There is nothing petty or knickknacky or clever or obscene about anything connected with wheat. It is clean and strong and vital. Wheat is bread. It is the staff of life.

When Sank came up the east side he saw the Chinese elms. On the west side he looked at a great pasture of Argentine pampa grass. On the south side he passed a sixty-foot border of African Sudan grass. Originally it had prevented the Sudan from blowing Egypt off the map. Now they have got it working in the Dust Bowl. And all about Sank were the big green Russian thistles which he had plowed up, and which would become huge tumbleweeds and go galloping over the plains like horses.

Argentine pampa grass, African Sudan, Russian thistles, and Chinese elms. From the four corners of the earth. All growing together right in the Panhandle, U. S. A. Nature—if nobody else—was getting international. Nature and machinery. Neither spoke any language, noticed any color, recognized any boundary. So there was still hope for men. . . .

It had better be noted, the metamorphosis of the man with the hoe. Millet, on canvas, caught and held that brutish, hopeless earthpecker leaning on a crude hand-tool. Markham, beholding him, appalled, asked greatly and bitterly, why and how? The tragedy of the world was summed up in that eloquent painting, those awful words. But you can't say: "Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans upon his F-30 tractor."

Driving that tractor Sank didn't look like a humble and degraded tiller of



the soil. He didn't look like a hay-chewing rube with chin whiskers, or a dunghill yokel, or a peasant without thought or hope. The tractor had done that. It had changed a farmer from a clod into an operator; from a dumb brute into a mechanic, all over the world. The tractor had done more to make him a self-respecting man than anything that had ever happened in the whole history of agriculture since the invention of the wheel.

The man with the tractor does not gaze on the ground. Unavoidably, by the nature of things, Sank sat and gazed at the distant horizon, which was on a level with his eyes. He gazed at it when the sky was clear and steel-blue, and when the moon set behind clouds that moved slowly in serried masses, and when the sun came up like a ball of fire, a flaming red.

Sank finished sowing his wheat. He raised the discs out of the ground and drove his tractor over the impregnated earth toward his house. It was twilight. The sky was overcast and the air was sultry. But you couldn't say "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way." Sank's eyes, gleaming through caked dirt, were red, but he showed no other signs of fatigue, though he was hot and sweaty and dirty.

He felt a drop of rain on his shoulder. Another. And then a lot more. He watched the big drops strike into the dry, thirsty soil. The rain was wet and cool. And now it began to come down in a slow steady downpour. The wheat, the earth were drinking it up. Sank had got the job done now and it was raining. It made him feel good. Wet to the skin, water pouring down his dirty face, he sat erect in the tractor seat, steering the juggernaut to the house.

## EARLY DAYS

(From Mark Twain's Autobiography)

*Mark Twain* (1898)

It was a heavenly place for a boy, that farm of my Uncle John's. The house was a double log one, with a spacious floor (roofed in) connecting it with the kitchen. In the summer the table was set in the middle of that shady and breezy floor, and the sumptuous meals—well, it makes me cry to think of them. Fried chicken, roast pig; wild and tame turkeys, ducks, and geese; venison just killed; squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, prairie-chickens; biscuits, hot batter cakes, hot buckwheat cakes, hot "wheat bread," hot rolls, hot corn pone; fresh corn boiled on the ear, succotash, butter-beans, string-beans, tomatoes, peas, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes; buttermilk, sweet milk, "clabber"; watermelons, muskmelons, cantaloupes—all fresh from the garden; apple pie, peach pie, pumpkin pie, apple dumplings, peach cobbler—I can't remember the rest. The way that the things were cooked was perhaps the main splendor—particularly a certain few of the dishes. For instance, the corn bread, the hot biscuits and wheat bread, and the fried chicken. These things have never been properly cooked in the North—in fact, no one there is able

to learn the art, so far as my experience goes. The North thinks it knows how to make corn bread, but this is mere superstition. Perhaps no bread in the world is quite so good as Southern corn bread, and perhaps no bread in the world is quite so bad as the Northern imitation of it. The North seldom tries to fry chicken, and this is well; the art cannot be learned north of the line of Mason and Dixon, nor anywhere in Europe. This is not hearsay; it is experience that is speaking. In Europe it is imagined that the custom of serving various kinds of bread blazing hot is "American," but that is too broad a spread; it is custom in the South, but is much less than that in the North. In the North and in Europe hot bread is considered unhealthy. This is probably another fussy superstition, like the European superstition that ice-water is unhealthy. Europe does not need ice-water and does not drink it; and yet, notwithstanding this, its word for it is better than ours, because it describes it, whereas ours doesn't. Europe calls it "iced" water. Our word describes water made from melted ice—a drink which has a characterless taste and which we have but little acquaintance with.

It seems a pity that the world should throw away so many good things merely because they are unwholesome. I doubt if God has given us any refreshment which, taken in moderation, is unwholesome, except microbes. Yet there are people who strictly deprive themselves of each and every eatable, drinkable, and smokable which has in any way acquired a shady reputation. They pay this price for health. And health is all they get for it. How strange it is! It is like paying out your whole fortune for a cow that has gone dry.

The farmhouse stood in the middle of a very large yard, and the yard was fenced on three sides with rails and on the rear side with high palings; against these stood the smoke-house; beyond the palings was the orchard; beyond the orchard were the Negro quarters and the tobacco fields. The front yard was entered over a stile made of sawed-off logs of graduated heights; I do not remember any gate. In a corner of the front yard were a dozen lofty hickory trees and a dozen black walnuts, and in the nutting season riches were to be gathered there.

Down a piece, abreast the house, stood a little log cabin against the rail fence; and there the woody hill fell sharply away, past the barns, the corn-crib, the stables, and the tobacco-curing house, to a limpid brook which sang along over its gravelly bed and curved and frisked in and out and here and there and yonder in the deep shade of overhanging foliage and vines—a divine place for wading, and it had swimming pools, too, which were forbidden to us and therefore much frequented by us. For we were little Christian children and had early been taught the value of forbidden fruit.

I can see the farm yet, with perfect clearness. I can see all its belongings, all its details; the family room of the house, with a "trundle" bed in one corner and a spinning-wheel in another—a wheel whose rising and falling wail, heard from a distance, was the mournfullest of all sounds to me, and made me home-

sick and low-spirited, and filled my atmosphere with the wandering spirits of the dead; the vast fireplace, piled high, on winter nights, with flaming hickory logs from whose ends a sugary sap bubbled out, but did not go to waste, for we scraped it off and ate it; the lazy cat spread out on the rough hearthstones; the drowsy dogs braced against the jambs and blinking; my aunt in one chimney corner, knitting; my uncle in the other, smoking his corn-cob pipe; the slick and carpetless oak floor faintly mirroring the dancing flame tongues and freckled with black indentations where fire coals had popped out and died a leisurely death; half a dozen children romping in the background twilight; "split"-bottomed chairs here and there, some with rockers; a cradle—out of service, but waiting, with confidence; in the early cold mornings a snuggle of children, in shirts and chemises, occupying the hearthstone and procrastinating—they could not bear to leave that comfortable place and go out on the wind-swept floor space between the house and kitchen where the general tin basin stood, and wash.

Along outside of the front fence ran the country road, dusty in the summertime, and a good place for snakes—they liked to lie in it and sun themselves; when they were rattlesnakes or puff adders, we killed them; when they were black snakes, or racers, or belonged to the fabled "hoop" breed, we fled, without shame; when they were "house snakes," or "garters," we carried them home and put them in Aunt Patsy's work basket for a surprise; for she was prejudiced against snakes, and always when she took the basket in her lap and they began to climb out of it it disordered her mind. She never could seem to get used to them; her opportunities went for nothing. And she was always cold toward bats, too, and could not bear them; and yet I think a bat is as friendly a bird as there is. My mother was Aunt Patsy's sister and had the same wild superstitions. A bat is beautifully soft and silky; I do not know any creature that is pleasanter to the touch or is more grateful for caressings, if offered in the right spirit. I know all about these coleoptera, because our great cave, three miles below Hannibal, was multitudinously stocked with them, and often I brought them home to amuse my mother with. It was easy to manage it if it was a school day, because then I had ostensibly been to school and hadn't any bats. She was not a suspicious person, but full of trust and confidence; and when I said, "There's something in my coat pocket for you," she would put her hand in. But she always took it out again, herself; I didn't have to tell her. It was remarkable, the way she couldn't learn to like private bats. The more experience she had, the more she could not change her views.

. . . . .

As I have said, I spent some part of every year at the farm until I was twelve or thirteen years old. The life which I led there with my cousins was full of charm, and so is the memory of it yet. I can call back the solemn twilight and mystery of the deep woods, the earthy smells, the faint odors of the wild flowers, the sheen of rain-washed foliage, the rattling clatter of drops when the wind shook the trees, the far-off hammering of woodpeckers and

the muffled drumming of wood pheasants in the remoteness of the forest, the snapshot glimpses of disturbed wild creatures scurrying through the grass—I can call it all back and make it as real as it ever was, and as blessed. I can call back the prairie, and its loneliness and peace, and a vast hawk hanging motionless in the sky, with his wings spread wide and the blue of the vault showing through the fringe of their end feathers. I can see the woods in their autumn dress, the oaks purple, the hickories washed with gold, the maples and the sumachs luminous with crimson fires, and I can hear the rustle made by the fallen leaves as we plowed through them. I can see the blue clusters of wild grapes hanging among the foliage of the saplings, and I remember the taste of them and the smell. I know how the wild blackberries looked, and how they tasted, and the same with the pawpaws, the hazelnuts, and the persimmons; and I can feel the thumping rain, upon my head, of hickory nuts and walnuts when we were out in the frosty dawn to scramble for them with the pigs, and the gusts of wind loosed them and sent them down. I know the stain of blackberries, and how pretty it is, and I know the stain of walnut hulls, and how little it minds soap and water, also what grudging experience it had of either of them. I know the taste of maple sap, and when to gather it, and how to arrange the troughs and the delivery tubes, and how to boil down the juice, and how to hook the sugar after it is made, also how much better hooked sugar tastes than any that is honestly come by, let bigots say what they will. I know how a prize watermelon looks when it is sunning its fat rotundity among pumpkin vines and “simblins”; I know how to tell when it is ripe without “plugging” it; I know how inviting it looks when it is cooling itself in a tub of water under the bed, waiting; I know how it looks when it lies on the table in the sheltered great floor space between house and kitchen, and the children gathered for the sacrifice and their mouths watering; I know the crackling sound it makes when the carving knife enters its end, and I can see the split fly along in front of the blade as the knife cleaves its way to the other end; I can see its halves fall apart and display the rich red meat and the black seeds, and the heart standing up, a luxury fit for the elect; I know how a boy looks behind a yard-long slice of that melon, and I know how he feels; for I have been there. I know the taste of the watermelon which has been honestly come by, and I know the taste of the watermelon which has been acquired by art. Both taste good, but the experienced know which tastes best. I know the look of green apples and peaches and pears on the trees, and I know how entertaining they are when they are inside of a person. I know how ripe ones look when they are piled in pyramids under the trees, and how pretty they are and how vivid their colors. I know how a frozen apple looks, in a barrel down cellar in the wintertime, and how hard it is to bite, and how the frost makes the teeth ache, and yet how good it is, notwithstanding. I know the disposition of elderly people to select the speckled apples for the children, and I once knew ways to beat the game. I know the look of an apple that is roasting and sizzling on a hearth on a winter’s evening, and I know the comfort that comes of eating it hot, along with some sugar and drenched in cream. I know

the delicate art and mystery of so cracking hickory nuts and walnuts on a flatiron with a hammer that the kernels will be delivered whole, and I know how the nuts, taken in conjunction with winter apples, cider, and doughnuts, make old people's old tales and old jokes sound fresh and crisp and enchanting, and juggle an evening away before you know what went with the time. I know the look of Uncle Dan'l's kitchen as it was on the privileged nights, when I was a child, and I can see the white and black children grouped on the hearth, with the firelight playing on their faces and the shadows flickering upon the walls, clear back toward the cavernous gloom of the rear, and I can hear Uncle Dan'l telling the immortal tales which Uncle Remus Harris was to gather into his book and charm the world with, by and by; and I can feel again the creepy joy which quivered through me when the time for the ghost story was reached—and the sense of regret, too, which came over me, for it was always the last story of the evening and there was nothing between it and the unwelcome bed.

I can remember the bare wooden stairway in my uncle's house, and the turn to the left above the landing, and the rafters and the slanting roof over my bed, and the squares of moonlight on the floor, and the white cold world of snow outside, seen through the curtainless window. I can remember the howling of the wind and the quaking of the house on stormy nights, and how snug and cozy one felt, under the blankets, listening; and how the powdery snow used to sift in, around the sashes, and lie in little ridges on the floor and make the place look chilly in the morning and curb the wild desire to get up—in case there was any. I can remember how very dark that room was, in the dark of the moon, and how packed it was with ghostly stillness when one woke up by accident away in the night, and forgotten sins came flocking out of the secret chambers of the memory and wanted a hearing; and how ill chosen the time seemed for this kind of business; and how dismal was the hoo-hooing of the owl and the wailing of the wolf, sent mourning by on the night wind.

I remember the raging of the rain on that roof, summer nights, and how pleasant it was to lie and listen to it, and enjoy the white splendor of the lightning and the majestic booming and crashing of the thunder. It was a very satisfactory room, and there was a lightning rod which was reachable from the window, an adorable and skittish thing to climb up and down, summer nights, when there were duties on hand of a sort to make privacy desirable.

I remember the 'coon and 'possum hunts, nights, with the Negroes, and the long marches through the black gloom of the woods, and the excitement which fired everybody when the distant bay of an experienced dog announced that the game was treed; then the wild scramblings and stumblings through briars and bushes and over roots to get to the spot; then the lighting of a fire and the felling of the tree, the joyful frenzy of the dogs and the Negroes, and the weird picture it all made in the red glare—I remember it all well, and the delight that everyone got out of it, except the 'coon.

I remember the pigeon seasons, when the birds would come in millions

and cover the trees and by their weight break down the branches. They were clubbed to death with sticks; guns were not necessary and were not used. I remember the squirrel hunts, and prairie chicken hunts, and wild-turkey hunts, and all that; and how we turned out, mornings, while it was still dark, to go on these expeditions, and how chilly and dismal it was, and how often I regretted that I was well enough to go. A toot on a tin horn brought twice as many dogs as were needed, and in their happiness they raced and scampered about, and knocked small people down, and made no end of unnecessary noise. At the word, they vanished away toward the woods, and we drifted silently after them in the melancholy gloom. But presently the gray dawn stole over the world, the birds piped up, then the sun rose and poured light and comfort all around, everything was fresh and dewy and fragrant, and life was a boon again. After three hours of tramping we arrived back wholesomely tired, overladen with game, very hungry, and just in time for breakfast.

### MOMENTS OF LIVING

(*From Black Boy*)

*Richard Wright (1945)*

EACH event spoke with a cryptic tongue. And the moments of living slowly revealed their coded meanings. There was the wonder I felt when I first saw a brace of mountainlike, spotted, black-and-white horses clopping down a dusty road through clouds of powdered clay.

There was the delight I caught in seeing long straight rows of red and green vegetables stretching away in the sun to the bright horizon.

There was the faint, cool kiss of sensuality when dew came on to my cheeks and shins as I ran down the wet green garden paths in the early morning.

There was the vague sense of the infinite as I looked down upon the yellow, dreaming waters of the Mississippi River from the verdant bluffs of Natchez.

There were the echoes of nostalgia I heard in the crying strings of wild geese winging south against a bleak, autumn sky.

There was the tantalizing melancholy in the tingling scent of burning hickory wood.

There was the teasing and impossible desire to imitate the petty pride of sparrows wallowing and flouncing in the red dust of country roads.

There was the yearning for identification loosed in me by the sight of a solitary ant carrying a burden upon a mysterious journey.

There was the disdain that filled me as I tortured a delicate, blue-pink crawfish that huddled fearfully in the mudsill of a rusty tin can.

There was the aching glory in masses of clouds burning gold and purple from an invisible sun.

There was the liquid alarm I saw in the blood-red glare of the sun's after-glow mirrored in the squared panes of whitewashed frame houses.

There was the languor I felt when I heard green leaves rustling with a rainlike sound.

There was the incomprehensible secret embodied in a whitish toadstool hiding in the dark shade of a rotting log.

There was the experience of feeling death without dying that came from watching a chicken leap about blindly after its neck had been snapped by a quick twist of my father's wrist.

There was the great joke that I felt God had played on cats and dogs by making them lap their milk and water with their tongues.

There was the thirst I had when I watched clear, sweet juice trickle from sugar cane being crushed.

There was the hot panic that welled up in my throat and swept through my blood when I first saw the lazy, limp coils of a blue-skinned snake sleeping in the sun.

There was the speechless astonishment of seeing a hog stabbed through the heart, dipped into boiling water, scraped, split open, gutted, and strung up gaping and bloody.

There was the love I had for the mute regality of tall, moss-clad oaks.

There was the hint of cosmic cruelty that I felt when I saw the curved timbers of a wooden shack that had been warped in the summer sun.

There was the saliva that formed in my mouth whenever I smelt clay dust potted with fresh rain.

There was the cloudy notion of hunger when I breathed the odor of new-cut, bleeding grass.

And there was the quiet terror that suffused my senses when vast hazes of gold washed earthward from star-heavy skies on silent nights. . . .

## HERE IS HOME

*Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1942)*

### I

CROSS CREEK is a bend in a country road, by land, and the flowing of Lochloosa Lake into Orange Lake, by water. We are four miles west of the small village of Island Grove, nine miles east of a turpentine still, and on the other sides we do not count distance at all, for the two lakes and the broad marshes create an infinite space between us and the horizon. We are five white families: 'Old Boss' Brice, the Glissons, the Mackays, and the Bernie Basses; and two colored families, Henry Woodward and the Mickenses. People in Island

Grove consider us just a little bigotty and more than a little queer. Black Kate and I between us once misplaced some household object, quite unreasonably.

I said, 'Kate, am I crazy, or are you?'

She gave me her quick sideways glance that was never entirely impudent:

'Likely all two of us. Don't you reckon it take somebody a little bit crazy to live out here at the Creek?'

At one time or another most of us at the Creek have been suspected of a degree of madness. Madness is only a variety of mental nonconformity, and we are all individualists here.

The Creek folk of color are less suspect than the rest of us. Yet there is something a little different about them from blacks who live gregariously in Quarters, so that even if they did not live at the Creek, they would stay, I think, somehow aloof from the layer-cake life of the average Negro. Tom Glisson and Old Boss and I think anybody is crazy not to live here, but I know what Kate meant. We have chosen a deliberate isolation, and are enamored of it.

Something about Cross Creek suits us—or something about us makes us cling to it contentedly, lovingly, and often in exasperation, through the vicissitudes that have driven others away.

'I wouldn't live any place else,' Tom said, 'if I had gold buried in Georgia. I tell you, so much happens at Cross Creek.'

We at the Creek need and have found only very simple things. We must need flowing and fruiting trees, for all of us have citrus groves of one size or another. We must need a certain blandness of season, with a longer and more beneficent heat than many require, for there is never too much sun for us, and through the long summers we do not complain. We need the song of birds, and there is none finer than the redbird. We need the sound of rain coming across the *hamaca*, and the sound of wind in trees—and there is no more sensitive Aeolian harp than the palm. The pine is good, for the needles brushing one another have a great softness, and we have the wind in the pines, too.

We need above all, I think, a certain remoteness from urban confusion; and while this can be found in other places, Cross Creek offers it with such beauty and grace that, once entangled with it, no other place seems possible to us, just as when truly in love none other offers the comfort of the beloved. We are not even offended when others do not share our delight. Tom Glisson and I often laugh together at the people who consider the Creek dull or, in the precise sense, outlandish.

'There was a fellow woke me up,' he said, 'was lost. I'd heard his car go by and hit the Creek bridge like cattle stomped. I wondered if any one in that big of a hurry knowed where he was going. Directly he come back and stopped and I heard him holler from the gate. I pulled on my breeches and went out to him. I said, "Reckon you're lost." "Lost ain't the word for it," he said. "Is this the end of the world? Where in God's name am I?" I said,



"Mister, you're at Cross Creek." "That don't tell me a thing," he said. "I still ain't anywhere."

'People in town sometimes say to me when I start home at night,' I said, "We hate to see you drive off alone to that awful place."

'Well,' he said comfortably, 'they just don't know the Creek.'

We do. We know one another. Our knowledge is a strange kind, totally without intimacy, for we go our separate ways and meet only when new fences are strung, or someone's stock intrudes on another, or when one of us is ill or in trouble, or when woods fires come too close, or when a shooting occurs and we must agree who is right and who must go to jail, or when the weather is so preposterous, either as to heat or cold, or rain or drought, that we seek out excuses to be together, to talk together about the common menace. We get into violent arguments and violent quarrels, sometimes about stock, sometimes because we take sides with our favorites when the dark Mickens family goes on the warpath. The village exaggerates our differences and claims that something in the Creek water makes people quarrelsome. Our amenities pass unnoticed. We do injustices among ourselves, and another of us, not directly involved, usually manages to put in a judicious word on the side of right. The one who is wrong usually ends by admitting it, and all is well again, and I have done my share of the eating of humble pie. And when the great enemies Old Starvation and Old Death come skulking down on us, we put up a united front and fight them side by side, as we fight the woods fires. Each of us knows the foibles of the others and the strength and the weaknesses, and who can be counted on for what. Old Aunt Martha Mickens, with her deceptive humility and her face like poured chocolate, is perhaps the shuttle that has woven our knowledge, carrying back and forth, with the apparent innocence of a nest-building bird, the most revealing bits of gossip; the sort of gossip that tells, not trivial facts, but human motives and the secrets of human hearts. Each of us pretends that she carries these threads only about others and never about us, but we all know better, and that none of us is spared.

A dozen other whites and a baker's dozen of other blacks have lived at one time or another among us, or in the immediate vicinity of the Creek, coming and going like the robins. We are clannish and do not feel the same about them as we feel about ourselves. It was believed in the beginning that I was one of these. Surely the Creek would drive me away. When it was clear that a freezing of the orange crop was as great a catastrophe to me as to the others, surely I would not be here long. It was when old Martha, who had set up the Brices as Old Boss and Old Miss, referred to me one day as Young Miss, that it was understood by all of us that I was here to stay.

For myself, the Creek satisfies a thing that had gone hungry and unfed since childhood days. I am often lonely. Who is not? But I should be lonelier in the heart of a city. And as Tom says, 'So much happens here.' I walk at sunset, east along the road. There are no houses in that direction, except the

abandoned one where the wild plums grow, white with bloom in springtime. I usually walk halfway to the village and back again. No one goes, like myself, on foot, except Bernie Bass perhaps, striding firmly in rubber boots with his wet sack of fish over his shoulder. Sometimes black Henry passes with a mule and wagon, taking a load of lightwood home to Old Boss; sometimes a neighbor's car, or the wagon that turns off toward the turpentine woods to collect the resin, or the timber truck coming out from the pine woods. The white folks call 'Hey!' and children wave gustily and with pleasure. A stranger driving by usually slows down and asks whether I want a lift. The Negroes touch a finger to their ragged caps or pretend courteously not to see me. Evening after evening I walk as far as the magnolias near Big Hammock, and home, and see no one.

Folk call the road lonely, because there is not human traffic and human stirring. Because I have walked it so many times and seen such a tumult of life there, it seems to me one of the most populous highways of my acquaintance. I have walked it in ecstasy, and in joy it is beloved. Every pine tree, every gallberry bush, every passion vine, every joree rustling in the underbrush, is vibrant. I have walked it in trouble, and the wind in the trees beside me is easing. I have walked it in despair, and the red of the sunset is my own blood dissolving into the night's darkness. For all such things were on earth before us, and will survive after us, and it is given to us to join ourselves with them and to be comforted.

## II

The road goes west out of the village, past open pine woods and gallberry flats. An eagle's nest is a ragged cluster of sticks in a tall tree, and one of the eagles is usually black and silver against the sky. The other perches near the nest, hunched and proud, like a griffon. There is no magic here except the eagles. Yet the four miles to the Creek are stirring, like the bleak, portentous beginning of a good tale. The road curves sharply, the vegetation thickens and, around the bend, masses into dense hammock. The hammock breaks, is pushed back on either side of the road; and set down in its brooding heart is the orange grove.

Any grove or any wood is a fine thing to see. But the magic here, strangely, is not apparent from the road. It is necessary to leave the impersonal highway, to step inside the rusty gate and close it behind. By this, an act of faith is committed, through which one accepts blindly the communion cup of beauty. One is now inside the grove, out of one world and in the mysterious heart of another. Enchantment lies in different things for each of us. For me, it is in this: to step out of the bright sunlight into the shade of orange trees; to walk under the arched canopy of their jadelike leaves; to see the long aisles of lichened trunks stretch ahead in a geometric rhythm; to feel the mystery of a seclusion that yet has shafts of light striking through it. This is the essence of an ancient and secret magic. It goes back, perhaps, to

the fairy tales of childhood, to Hansel and Gretel, to Babes in the Wood, to Alice in Wonderland, to all half-luminous places that pleased the imagination as a child. It may go back still farther, to racial Druid memories, to an atavistic sense of safety and delight in an open forest. And after long years of spiritual homelessness, of nostalgia, here is that mystic loveliness of childhood again. Here is home. An old thread, long tangled, comes straight again.

I think that the shabbiness of the Creek is a part of its endearing quality. It is comfortable and weather-beaten, meeting Time halfway. I am sometimes tempted to put up a new fence across the house yard. I have always thought that a white picket fence must be a great comfort to a householder. I think of the pride I should take in seeing white paint gleaming from around the bend in the road. Then Snow, the grove man, becomes quietly tired of waiting for me to do something, and comes driving the farm truck into the yard over the cattlegap with a load of fresh fatwood pine posts from the hammock.

He asks, 'You aim to use the old gate, don't you?'

I aim to use the old gate, and say so, and Snow goes ahead and replaces the rotten and sagging posts with new ones. He tightens the fence wire, 'Hog and cattle 4-inch mesh,' and the effect is trim and eminently suitable. I tell myself that a white picket fence would interfere with the feeling one has inside the house of being part of the grove; that a new fence would mean tearing out the coral honeysuckle vines that cling passionately to the old wire. But the real objection is that an elegant fence would bring to the Creek a wanton orderliness that is out of place.

When I came to the Creek, and knew the old grove and farmhouse at once as home, there was some terror, such as one feels in the first recognition of a human love; for the joining of person to place, as of person to person, is a commitment to shared sorrow, even as to shared joy. The farmhouse was all dinginess. It sat snugly then as now under tall old orange trees and had a simple grace of line: low, rambling, and one-storied. But it was cracked and gray for lack of paint, there was a tin roof that would have ruined a mansion, and the porch was an excrescence, scarcely wide enough for one to pass in front of the chairs. The yard was bare sand spotted with sandspurs, with three lean Duchess rosebushes left behind to starve, like cats. Inside the house, all the delight of the Florida sunlight vanished. The walls were painted a battleship gray and the floors a muddy ochre. The brick fireplaces were walled over with tin and filled with a year's rubbish. It was four years before the gray of the last room was decently covered with white, money for paint being scarce, and time so filled with other work that an hour with the brush was a stolen pleasure. And even now, the house shining inside and out, roofed with good gray hand-hewn cypress shingles, the long, wide screened veranda an invitation to step either inside or out, the yard in lush green grass, there is still a look of weather-worn shabbiness. It is a constant reminder that wind and rain and harsh sun and the encroaching jungle are ready at any moment to take over.

The battle has not gone too well for all at the Creek. One or two have gone ahead, some hold precariously to the narrow ledge of existence, and others have slipped back and back, until each day's subsistence has become a triumph. Their houses reflect their fortunes. Mine lies the farthest east in the small settlement. To the west are my neighbors, my friends. There have been enmities. At the moment, we are living in unparalleled amiability, a state at Cross Creek that, like a sinner's hope of heaven, is never assured. But it makes a good moment in which to speak of other people.

I live within screaming distance of Tom Glisson and Old Boss Brice. This is literal. No ordinary sound carries from one place to the other. We hear faintly the barking of one another's dogs. We hear the far crowing at dawn of one another's roosters. Occasionally, when the wind is right, I hear the Brice or Glisson cows lowing at milking time, night or morning. No voice carries, ever. A determined scream is audible. This I proved, not in a time of fear, but in a time of fury. I should be ashamed but am not. Of folk who would have been silent under the circumstances, there comes to mind only Saint Francis, and I believe that he might have cast despairing eyes to heaven.

I can bear much physical discomfort and a great deal of actual pain, but now and then one achieves a combination of bodily annoyances that makes Job's boils seem a luxury. I shall be brief and explicit. I was entirely alone on the grove. The summer was one of the two unbearable ones, as to heat, that I have known in my years here. Summer is our unproductive period for vegetables. I had been some time without them, and was afflicted with an itching rash that I recognized too late as nutritional. The Widow Slater and I had been repairing fences together, for I gave her pasture for her milch cow in return for milking my own. We had ploughed through long vines of poison ivy along the decrepit fence. Her long black flowing skirts had evidently protected her. I had worked stockingless and in brief voile. The poison ivy had erupted from hips to ankle, from finger tips to throat, overlying the rash.

Soothing ointments and a prone position might have brought some ease. I was far from ointments and too busy to lie down. My cow broke loose from the pasture and came into the grove, tearing at the low-hanging orange boughs. I drove her out and penned her properly, and, returning to the house, found myself in the middle of a patch of sandspurs waist high. These barbed instruments of torture are all the proof one needs that there is a Devil as well as a God. I was enmeshed with sandspurs; they stuck to voile skirts and to petticoat, creeping up underneath and getting a firm hold with one or two barbs, leaving the others free to grate against my skin. On normal skin they are like arrows. On a skin covered with rash and poison ivy, they were shafts of fire. I plucked at them as I went and came to the house. There the dogs were waiting for me, shut on the back porch, since they had nothing but chaos to contribute in the matter of penning a cow.

I did not think they had been there very long. Even for puppies, it did not

seem too much to ask of them that they wait like gentlemen for, say, half an hour. There were four, all told. There was my own puppy. There were two of his litter mates that the traveling owner had asked me to keep for him. There was old Sport, whose huntsman master, my friend Fred, had left with me while he fished on the east coast. I can only relate that time is relative, and that what seemed like a short period to me was evidently a long, long time in the minds of three puppies. Old Sport had become excited at their incontinence and forgotten himself, too. The porch was a shambles. Water for cleansing had to be brought from the outside pump, a bucket at a time. It took twenty buckets, as I remember, and dusk was on me when I finished.

I went then, the porch well cleaned, wet and glistening in the fading light, to water my garden. There were a few carrots that I hoped to bring through the heat, a few zinnias, half a dozen desperate collard plants—poor things but mine own. I pulled away sandspurs abstractedly as I carried out the watering pot. The mosquitoes descended on me. One would think that exposed neck, arms, and face would suffice the hungriest of insects. But a mosquito is a Freudian, taking delight only in the hidden places. They wavered with their indecisive flight up under my skirts and stabbed me in the poison ivy, in the nutritional rash, around the sandspurs, and settled with hums of joy in all unoccupied small spaces. It was too much. I set down the watering pot, and with no thought of help for my distress, for I was past helping, let out shriek after shriek of sheer indulgent frustration. As I say, Saint Francis might have blessed the puppies and old Sport and the mosquitoes, with a kind word thrown in for the sandspurs, but I am not of the stuff of saints. I screamed. The screaming satisfied me. I finished the watering, went into the house, fed the dogs, made myself a supper, and went to the veranda to meditate. As I sat, exhausted but content, two figures strolled cautiously up the road and paused in front of my gate. It was Tom Glisson and Old Boss.

Old Boss called, 'Everything all right?'

'Why, yes,' I said. 'Yes, indeed.'

Tom said, 'Seemed to us like we heard somebody call for help. We just wondered, was everything all right.'

I hesitated. After all, there was nothing to be done, and at the moment, it seemed, nothing too embarrassing not to be told.

'I was singing,' I said. 'Perhaps you heard me—singing.'

'Oh,' they said, and turned and walked home again.

So I say that I live within screaming distance of my nearest neighbors.

### III

Old Boss's grove joins up with mine. We share an east-west fence line. Old Boss wandered down to Florida from Georgia as a boy, nearly sixty years ago. He came down to die, he told me once, and wanted to die in the tropical sunshine. He is still a frail little man, but I think he drew sustenance from the

sun and earth and the fruiting trees around him. He clerked in a country store in the village and became the owner. He yearned always for the Creek, he said. At last he took over the neglected grove on an unpaid mortgage and moved out. It means to him precisely what it means to me, and we sometimes sit together on his back porch and just look about us and say nothing. We seldom meet, but when we see each other down the road, we wave, and I know that the same warm feeling comes over the old man that comes to me. He has been father, arbiter, disciplinarian to all the Negroes who have ever lived or worked here. I challenged his authority on one occasion, but that is another story. His house is a rococo two-story affair, tall and gangling like an antique spinster. There is bamboo in the sandy yard, and hibiscus and allamanda, and a pittosporum that is so old it is not a shrub, but a great tree, covered in spring with minute flowers of a strange exotic scent. The house is on the opposite side of the road from mine, just out of sight.

Tom Glisson lives on the same side of the road as I do, just opposite Old Boss. Tom has prospered. He and his wife are Georgia folk, too, and as hard workers as I have ever known. I am not at all sure that Tom can read or write, but he talks well, with a flair for the picturesque and the dramatic. He was put to the plough when he was so small he could scarcely reach the plough handles, he told me. He was given no education.

'I made up my mind,' he said, 'my young uns would get a better chance than their daddy.'

It has been good to see the three children grow tall and bright and handsome. The oldest boy even had a year at the University. The youngest, 'J.T.,' was a tragic little cripple when I first knew him. I would see him hobbling down the road on his crooked legs, with the luminous expression on his face that seems peculiar to those we call the 'afflicted.' Tom and his wife were not of the breed to accept an evil that could be changed, and they worked day and night to save money to send the boy away for braces and treatments. Now he too is tall and strong, and I saw him ride by yesterday on his own dwarf mule, talking to himself and lifting his hand to an invisible audience. He was, I knew, the Lone Ranger or perhaps Buck Rogers, but he took time out courteously from his duties to call 'Hey!' to me, then returned to his important and secret activities.

The Glisson house is small and brown, well kept, and the yard has been slowly given shrubs and even a bit of grass. Tom raises hogs and some cattle, has built up a little grove, and he and his wife do anything profitable they can turn their hands to. They have fought ill health as well as poverty, and it is sometimes hard to feel sympathy for what seem offhand less fortunate people, knowing what can be done with courage and hard work and thrift. Tom and I began with a strange mistrust of each other, and had some harsh encounters. I was in the wrong, and that is a story, too, and now I know him for a friend and would turn to him in any trouble.

There are no further houses until you take the sharp curve in the road that sweeps down to the Creek itself. There is a patch of thick hammock, an open field, and then, on the right, Old Joe's abandoned house. Old Joe Mackay is the last of a good farming family. The Mackay acres were well tilled and profitable some fifty years ago. There has been no regular cultivation for years, though now and then lately some farmer from the village rents the largest cleared field to raise some special crop. Old Joe lived alone in the old Mackay house. He is ageless in appearance, small and stooped and wiry, with his thin face ruddy from being on Orange Lake in every sort of weather. He runs a catfish line for a living. The house is as silver gray as the speckled perch he sometimes catches. It is a tall box of a house and even in its desertion maintains a look of sturdy livability. It was a good house in its day. Something about it is beautiful, its color most of all, and tall palms bend over it, and there are live oaks and holly and a few orange trees around it, and the hammock is a soft curtain beyond it. It was because he had a house that he was able to get a wife. His good friend Tom Morrison found a pretty widow. He married the pretty widow to Old Joe, and Tom and Old Joe and the widow and the widow's children lived happily in the house.

Tom said, 'Somebody has to look out for Old Joe.'

I suppose the roof leaked, as old roofs do. The cockroaches may have become too abundant in the walls and floors. At any rate, the contented family left the house a few years ago and moved a hundred yards closer to the Creek, into the abandoned church on the same side of the road. They put up partitions to make rooms, moved the old pews out into the yard, and swept out the hymn books. The church has made a fine home. It sits under a magnificent live oak and is cozy in winter and cool in summer.

The old Mackay house was turned over for a time to Aunt Martha Micken and her husband, Old Will. The colored population of the Creek has the solid base of the Mickens family, against which other transient Negroes surge and retreat. When old Martha Mickens shall march at last through the walls of Jericho, shouting her Primitive Baptist hymns, a dark rock at the core of the Creek life will have been shattered to bits. She is nurse to any of us, black or white, who fall ill. She is midwife and layer-out of the dead. She is the only one who gives advice to all of us impartially. She is a dusky Fate, spinning away at the threads of our Creek existence.

Martha welcomed me to Cross Creek with old-fashioned formality. She came walking toward me in the grove one bright sunny December day. I turned to watch her magnificent carriage. It was erect, with a long, free, graceful stride. It was impossible to tell her age. She walked like a very young woman, and walks so to this day. She is getting on to seventy; yet glimpsing her down the road she might be a girl. She was dressed neatly in calico, with a handkerchief bound around her head, bandana fashion. She was a rich smooth brown. She came directly to me and inclined her head.

She said, 'I come to pay my respects. I be's Martha. Martha Mickens.'

I said, 'How do you do, Martha.'

She said, 'I wants to welcome you. Me and my man, Old Will, was the first hands on this place. Time the grove was planted, me and Will worked here. It's home to me.'

'Where do you live now?'

'T'other side o' the Creek. We too old now to do steady work, but I just wants to tell you, any time you gets in a tight, us is here to do what we can.'

'How long has it been since you worked here on the grove?'

'Sugar,' she said, 'I got no way o' tellin' the years. The years comes and the years goes. It's been a long time.'

'Was it the Herberts you worked for?'

'Yessum. They was mighty fine folks. They's been fine folks here since and they's been trash. But, Sugar, the grove ain't trash, and the Creek be's trashified here and there, but it's the Creek right on. I purely loves the Creek.'

I said, 'I love it, too.'

'Does you? Then you'll make out. I reckon you know, you got to be satisfied with a place to make out. And is you satisfied, then it don't make too much difference does you make out or no.'

We laughed together.

She said, 'Heap o' folks has lived here. Ain't nobody has lived here since the Herberts but had to scratch and scramble. The ones loved it stayed 'til death or sich takened 'em away. The ones ain't loved it has moved on like the wind moves.'

I said, 'The grove hasn't always made a living, then.'

'Pends on what you calls a livin'. To get yo' grease an' grits in the place you enjoys gettin' 'em, ain't that makin' a livin'?''

'Yes.'

'Then lemme tell you. Ain't nobody never gone cold-out hongry here. I'se seed the grove freeze to the ground. I'se seed it swivvel in a long drought. But, Sugar, they was grove here before my folks crossed the big water. They was wild grove here as long back as tongue can tell. Durin' the war for freedom the white ladies used to drive out here in wagons and pick the wild oranges to squeeze out the juice and send it to the sojers. And they'll be grove here right on, after you and me is forgotten. They'll be good land to plough, and mast in the woods for hogs, and ain't no need to go hongry. All the folks here ahead o' you has fit cold and wind and dry weather, but ain't nary one of 'em has goed hongry.'

Hunger at the moment was not immediate, but when it menaced later, I remembered the things the old black woman said, and I was comforted, sensing that one had only to hold tight to the earth itself and its abundance. And if others could fight adversity, so might I.

'I won't keep you,' she said. 'I jes' wanted to tell you I was here.'

She bobbed her head and went away.



## IV

We at the Creek draw our conclusions about the world from our intimate knowledge of one small portion of it.

Old Boss said, 'The Creek doesn't amount to anything. The people don't amount to anything. But if you're sick and have no money, they'll cook for you and fetch it to you, and they'll doctor you, and if you get past their doctoring, they'll send for a doctor and pay his bill. And if you die, they'll take up a collection and bury you. I figure it's just as close to heaven here as any other place.'

Martha and Old Boss are the best of us, and we trail on down through those of us doing the best we can with whatever we have to work with, to those who make no effort at all, and these lilies of the field are perhaps the most happily if the least profitably adjusted to life of us all. I think we may have more than the average share of tolerance and generosity. This is because life has not been easy for any of us, and because we live so close to one another's difficulties, in spite of our individualistic detachment, that when one of us suffers, the rest of us are outraged and wounded, too.

We step on one another's toes at the Creek, inevitably, but forgiveness follows quickly. Mr. Martin forgave my shooting of his pig because I 'talked so honest.' Tom Glisson forgave me my injustice against him. Our feud was violent.

One day my beautiful pointer dog, Mandy, struggled home from her morning jaunt down the road and died within a few minutes in convulsions. She had been killed by strychnine poison. I do not know and perhaps shall never know who killed her, or whether the matter was an unaccountable accident. At any rate, I laid the blame on neighbor Tom, for it was reported to me soon after that he had been heard to say he would not have a female dog at Cross Creek. It seemed that backwoods morals were involved. The dog had been in season and I had kept her shut up past the presumably safe two weeks, then had set her loose. The backwoods is prudish, and the mating of animals is not believed to be a salutary thing for the young to observe. It seemed archaic to me to blame the female and not the aggressive males.

I broke off relations with Tom and his friendly family, forbade him to set foot on my land, even to drive out his cows, refused to listen to his explanations, made dire threats in general. A year passed, a most unpleasant time, for all the Creek was divided. It was necessary for the Glissons to pass my gate with averted heads, and when we met in the village grocery store, embarrassment took over the whole shabby building. At the end of the year, my fences were found cut, and the hogs and cattle of all the Creek were at large in my grove. I believe now that vagrant hunters had taken the easiest way to get themselves and their dogs across the property. At the time, nothing would do but Tom was the culprit.

I sent a note to him; 'Tom Glisson. I wish to see you. Hurry up about it.'

He came, and we laid the cards on the table. I stated my grievances, and one by one he made a fool of me. He had indeed said that he would not have a female dog at the Creek, but he had meant, not that he would take a hand to prevent another from having one, but that he himself would not choose to have one. He reminded me of his own family's love of animals.

'I couldn't lift my hand against a dumb brute,' he said, and added, 'nor a speakin' one.'

There was an unmistakable integrity in his facing of the facts, going into each situation in detail. His blue eyes were direct and clear. In a revelation, I knew the man's character. Suddenly he burst into tears.

'That note you sent me. I'm as white as you are. You wrote like I was nobody.'

I was sick with shame. I made my apologies, and I was in tears, too. He wiped his away with the back of his calloused hand.

'You abused me once, about the dog, and I forgive you then.'

He laid his big hands on my shoulders.

'I'll forgive you again.'

We shook hands and agreed to a fresh start.

'All we got to do,' he said, 'is jest talk things over and stick together.'

I asked him then why another neighbor had insidiously tried to lay on him the blame about my dog. He thought deeply.

'All I can figure is, he's jealous. He wanted to make trouble for me. He ain't got anywhere in his life. You know how hard me and my wife has worked. You know we want our young uns to git a better chance in life than we've done had. We've got ahead a mite by near about killin' ourselves workin'. But some folks is jealous of another stridin'.'

Tom is one of my best friends today. It makes one very humble to receive a forgiveness one does not deserve.

## A CUP OF TEA

(*From Swann's Way*)

*Marcel Proust (1919)*

I FEEL that there is much to be said for the Celtic belief that the souls of those whom we have lost are held captive in some inferior being, in an animal, in a plant, in some inanimate object, and so effectively lost to us until the day (which to many never comes) when we happen to pass by the tree or to obtain possession of the object which forms their prison. Then they start and tremble, they call us by our name, and as soon as we have recognized their voice the spell is broken. We have delivered them: they have overcome death and return to share our life.

And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recap-

ture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) which we do not suspect. And as for that object, it depends on chance whether we come upon it or not before we ourselves must die.

Many years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray, save what was comprised in the theatre and the drama of my going to bed there, had any existence for me, when one day in winter, as I came home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent out for one of those short, plump little cakes called *petites madeleines*, which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted scallop of a pilgrim's shell. And soon, mechanically, weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, accidental, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I was conscious that it was connected with the taste of tea and cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature as theirs. Whence did it come? What did it signify? How could I seize upon and define it?

I drink a second mouthful, in which I find nothing more than in the first, a third, which gives me rather less than the second. It is time to stop; the potion is losing its magic. It is plain that the object of my quest, the truth, lies not in the cup but in myself. The tea has called up in me, but does not itself understand, and can only repeat indefinitely, with a gradual loss of strength, the same testimony; which I, too, cannot interpret, though I hope at least to be able to call upon the tea for it again and to find it there presently, intact and at my disposal, for my final enlightenment. I put down my cup and examine my own mind. It is for it to discover the truth. But how? What an abyss of uncertainty whenever the mind feels that some part of it has strayed beyond its own borders; when it, the seeker, is at once the dark region through which it must go seeking, where all its equipment will avail it nothing. Seek? More than that: create. It is face to face with something which does not so far exist, to which it alone can give reality and substance, which it alone can bring into the light of day.

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof of its existence, but only

the sense that it was a happy, that it was a real state in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished. I decide to attempt to make it reappear. I retrace my thoughts to the moment at which I drank the first spoonful of tea. I find again the same state, illumined by no fresh light. I compel my mind to make one further effort, to follow and recapture once again the fleeting sensation. And that nothing may interrupt it in its course I shut out every obstacle, every extraneous idea, I stop my ears and inhibit all attention to the sounds which come from the next room. And then, feeling that my mind is growing fatigued without having any success to report, I compel it for a change to enjoy that distraction which I have just denied it, to think of other things, to rest and refresh itself before the supreme attempt. And then for the second time I clear an empty space in front of it. I place in position before my mind's eye the still recent taste of that first mouthful, and I feel something start within me, something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise, something that has been embedded like an anchor at a great depth; I do not know yet what it is, but I can feel it mounting slowly; I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed.

Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, has tried to follow it into my conscious mind. But its struggles are too far off, too much confused; scarcely can I perceive the colourless reflection in which are blended the uncapturable whirling medley of radiant hues, and I cannot distinguish its form, cannot invite it, as the one possible interpreter, to translate to me the evidence of its contemporary, its inseparable paramour, the taste of cake soaked in tea; cannot ask it to inform me what special circumstance is in question, of what period in my past life.

Will it ultimately reach the clear surface of my consciousness, this memory, this old, dead moment which the magnetism of an identical moment has travelled so far to importune, to disturb, to raise up out of the very depths of my being? I cannot tell. Now that I feel nothing, it has stopped, has perhaps gone down again into its darkness, from which who can say whether it will ever rise? Ten times over I must essay the task, must lean down over the abyss. And each time the natural laziness which deters us from every difficult enterprise, every work of importance, has urged me to leave the thing alone, to drink my tea and to think merely of the worries of today and of my hopes for tomorrow, which let themselves be pondered over without effort or distress of mind.

And suddenly the memory returns. The taste was that of the little crumb of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before churchtime), when I went to say good day to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-flower tea. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it; perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the interval, without tasting them, on the trays in pastry-

cooks' windows, that their image had dissociated itself from those Combray days to take its place among others more recent; perhaps because of those memories, so long abandoned and put out of mind, nothing now survived, everything was scattered; the forms of things, including that of the little scallop-shell of pastry, so richly sensual under its severe, religious folds, were either obliterated or had been so long dormant as to have lost the power of expansion which would have allowed them to resume their place in my consciousness. But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, still, alone, more fragile, but with more vitality, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.

And once I had recognised the taste of the crumb of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-flowers which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like the scenery of a theatre to attach itself to the little pavilion, opening on to the garden, which had been built out behind it for my parents (the isolated panel which until that moment had been all that I could see); and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I was sent before luncheon, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine. And just as the Japanese amuse themselves by filling a porcelain bowl with water and steeping in it little crumbs of paper which until then are without character or form, but, the moment they become wet, stretch themselves and bend, take on colour and distinctive shape, become flowers or houses or people permanent and recognisable, so in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and of its surroundings, taking their proper shapes and growing solid, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.

## PAUL'S CASE

*Willa Cather (1920)*

IT WAS Paul's afternoon to appear before the faculty of the Pittsburgh High School to account for his various misdemeanors. He had been suspended a week ago, and his father had called at the Principal's office and confessed his perplexity about his son. Paul entered the faculty room suave and smiling. His clothes were a trifle out-grown, and the tan velvet on the collar of his

open overcoat was frayed and worn; but for all that there was something of the dandy about him, and he wore an opal pin in his neatly knotted black four-in-hand, and a red carnation in his button-hole. This latter adornment the faculty somehow felt was not properly significant of the contrite spirit befitting a boy under the ban of suspension.

Paul was tall for his age and very thin, with high, cramped shoulders and a narrow chest. His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy, and he continually used them in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy. The pupils were abnormally large, as though he were addicted to belladonna, but there was a glassy glitter about them which that drug does not produce.

When questioned by the Principal as to why he was there, Paul stated, politely enough, that he wanted to come back to school. This was a lie, but Paul was quite accustomed to lying; found it, indeed, indispensable for overcoming friction. His teachers were asked to state their respective charges against him, which they did with such a rancor and aggrievedness as evinced that this was not a usual case. Disorder and impertinence were among the offences named, yet each of his instructors felt that it was scarcely possible to put into words the real cause of the trouble, which lay in a sort of hysterically defiant manner of the boy's; in the contempt which they all knew he felt for them, and which he seemingly made not the least effort to conceal. Once, when he had been making a synopsis of a paragraph at the blackboard, his English teacher had stepped to his side and attempted to guide his hand. Paul had started back with a shudder and thrust his hands violently behind him. The astonished woman could scarcely have been more hurt and embarrassed had he struck at her. The insult was so involuntary and definitely personal as to be unforgettable. In one way and another, he had made all his teachers, men and women alike, conscious of the same feeling of physical aversion. In one class he habitually sat with his hand shading his eyes; in another he always looked out of the window during the recitation; in another he made a running commentary on the lecture, with humorous intent.

His teachers felt this afternoon that his whole attitude was symbolized by his shrug and his flippantly red carnation flower, and they fell upon him without mercy, his English teacher leading the pack. He stood through it smiling, his pale lips parted over his white teeth. (His lips were continually twitching, and he had a habit of raising his eyebrows that was contemptuous and irritating to the last degree.) Older boys than Paul had broken down and shed tears under that ordeal, but his set smile did not once desert him, and his only sign of discomfort was the nervous trembling of the fingers that toyed with the buttons of his overcoat, and an occasional jerking of the other hand which held his hat. Paul was always smiling, always glancing about him, seeming to feel that people might be watching him and trying to detect something. This conscious expression, since it was as far as possible from boyish mirthfulness, was usually attributed to insolence or "smartness."

As the inquisition proceeded, one of his instructors repeated an impertinent remark of the boy's, and the Principal asked him whether he thought that a courteous speech to make to a woman. Paul shrugged his shoulders slightly and his eyebrows twitched.

"I don't know," he replied. "I didn't mean to be polite or impolite, either. I guess it's a sort of way I have of saying things regardless."

The Principal asked him whether he didn't think that a way it would be well to get rid of. Paul grinned and said he guessed so. When he was told that he could go, he bowed gracefully and went out. His bow was like a repetition of the scandalous red carnation.

His teachers were in despair, and his drawing master voiced the feeling of them all when he declared there was something about the boy which none of them understood. He added: "I don't really believe that smile of his comes altogether from insolence; there's something sort of haunted about it. The boy is not strong, for one thing. There is something wrong about the fellow."

The drawing master had come to realize that, in looking at Paul, one saw only his white teeth and the forced animation of his eyes. One warm afternoon the boy had gone to sleep at his drawing-board, and his master had noted with amazement what a white, blue-veined face it was; drawn and wrinkled like an old man's about the eyes, the lips twitching even in his sleep.

His teachers left the building dissatisfied and unhappy; humiliated to have felt so vindictive toward a mere boy, to have uttered this feeling in cutting terms, and to have set each other on, as it were, in the gruesome game of intemperate reproach. One of them remembered having seen a miserable street cat set at bay by a ring of tormentors.

As for Paul, he ran down the hill whistling the Soldiers' Chorus from *Faust*, looking wildly behind him now and then to see whether some of his teachers were not there to witness his light-heartedness. As it was now late in the afternoon and Paul was on duty that evening as usher at Carnegie Hall, he decided that he would not go home to supper.

When he reached the concert hall the doors were not yet open. It was chilly outside, and he decided to go up into the picture gallery—always deserted at this hour—where there were some of Raffelli's gay studies of Paris streets and an airy blue Venetian scene or two that always exhilarated him. He was delighted to find no one in the gallery but the old guard, who sat in the corner, a newspaper on his knee, a black patch over one eye and the other closed. Paul possessed himself of the place and walked confidently up and down, whistling under his breath. After a while he sat down before a blue Rico and lost himself. When he bethought him to look at his watch, it was after seven o'clock, and he rose with a start and ran downstairs, making a face at Augustus Cæsar, peering out from the cast-room, and an evil gesture at the Venus of Milo as he passed her on the stairway.

When Paul reached the ushers' dressing-room half a dozen boys were there already, and he began excitedly to tumble into his uniform. It was one

of the few that at all approached fitting, and Paul thought it very becoming—though he knew the tight, straight coat accentuated his narrow chest, about which he was exceedingly sensitive. He was always excited when he dressed, twanging all over to the tuning of the strings and the preliminary flourishes of the horns in the music room; but tonight he seemed quite beside himself, and he teased and plagued the boys until, telling him that he was crazy, they put him down on the floor and sat on him.

Somewhat calmed by his suppression, Paul dashed out to the front of the house to seat the early comers. He was a model usher. Gracious and smiling he ran up and down the aisles. Nothing was too much trouble for him; he carried messages and brought programs as though it were his greatest pleasure in life, and all the people in his section thought him a charming boy, feeling that he remembered and admired them. As the house filled, he grew more and more vivacious and animated, and the color came to his cheeks and lips. It was very much as though this were a great reception and Paul were the host. Just as the musicians came to take their places, his English teacher arrived with checks for the seats which a prominent manufacturer had taken for the season. She betrayed some embarrassment when she handed Paul the tickets, and a *hauteur* which subsequently made her feel very foolish. Paul was startled for a moment, and had the feeling of wanting to put her out; what business had she here among all these fine people and gay colors? He looked her over and decided that she was not appropriately dressed and must be a fool to sit downstairs in such togs. The tickets had probably been sent her out of kindness, he reflected, as he put down a seat for her, and she had about as much right to sit there as he had.

When the symphony began Paul sank into one of the rear seats with a long sigh of relief, and lost himself as he had done before the Rico. It was not that symphonies, as such, meant anything in particular to Paul, but the first sigh of the instruments seemed to free some hilarious spirit within him; something that struggled there like the Genius in the bottle found by the Arab fisherman. He felt a sudden zest of life; the lights danced before his eyes and the concert hall blazed into unimaginable splendor. When the soprano soloist came on, Paul forgot even the nastiness of his teacher's being there, and gave himself up to the peculiar intoxication such personages always had for him. The soloist chanced to be a German woman, by no means in her first youth, and the mother of many children; but she wore a satin gown and a tiara, and she had that indefinable air of achievement, that world-shine upon her, which always blinded Paul to any possible defects.

After a concert was over, Paul was often irritable and wretched until he got to sleep—and tonight he was even more than usually restless. He had the feeling of not being able to let down; of its being impossible to give up this delicious excitement which was the only thing that could be called living at all. During the last number he withdrew and, after hastily changing his clothes in the dressing-room, slipped out to the side door where the singer's



carriage stood. Here he began pacing rapidly up and down the walk, waiting to see her come out.

Over yonder the Schenley, in its vacant stretch, loomed big and square through the fine rain, the windows of its twelve stories glowing like those of a lighted cardboard house under a Christmas tree. All the actors and singers of any importance stayed there when they were in the city, and a number of the big manufacturers of the place lived there in the winter. Paul had often hung about the hotel, watching the people go in and out, longing to enter and leave school-masters and dull care behind him forever.

At last the singer came out, accompanied by the conductor, who helped her into her carriage and closed the door with a cordial *auf wiedersehen*—which set Paul to wondering whether she were not an old sweetheart of his. Paul followed the carriage over to the hotel, walking so rapidly as not to be far from the entrance when the singer alighted and disappeared behind the swinging glass doors which were opened by a negro in a tall hat and a long coat. In the moment that the door was ajar, it seemed to Paul that he, too, entered. He seemed to feel himself go after her up the steps, into the warm, lighted building, into an exotic, a tropical world of shiny, glistening surfaces and basking ease. He reflected upon the mysterious dishes that were brought into the dining-room, the green bottles in buckets of ice, as he had seen them in the supper party pictures of the Sunday supplement. A quick gust of wind brought the rain down with sudden vehemence, and Paul was startled to find that he was still outside in the slush of the gravel driveway; that his boots were letting in the water and his scanty overcoat was clinging wet about him; that the lights in front of the concert hall were out, and that the rain was driving in sheets between him and the orange glow of the windows above him. There it was, what he wanted—tangibly before him like the fairy world of a Christmas pantomime; as the rain beat in his face, Paul wondered whether he were destined always to shiver in the black night outside, looking up at it.

He turned and walked reluctantly toward the car tracks. The end had to come some time; his father in his night clothes at the top of the stairs, explanations that did not explain, hastily improvised fictions that were forever tripping him up, his upstairs room and its horrible yellow wall-paper, the creaking bureau with the greasy plush collar-box, and over his painted wooden bed the pictures of George Washington and John Calvin, and the framed motto, "Feed my Lambs," which had been worked in red worsted by his mother, whom Paul could not remember.

Half an hour later Paul alighted from the Negley Avenue car and went slowly down one of the side streets off the main thoroughfare. It was a highly respectable street, where all the houses were exactly alike, and where business men of moderate means begot and reared large families of children, all of whom went to Sabbath school and learned the shorter catechism, and were interested in arithmetic; all of whom were as exactly alike as their homes, and of a piece with the monotony in which they lived. Paul never went up

Cordelia Street without a shudder of loathing. His home was next the house of the Cumberland minister. He approached it tonight with the nerveless sense of defeat, the hopeless feeling of sinking back forever into ugliness and commonness that he had always had when he came home. The moment he turned into Cordelia Street he felt the waters close above his head. After each of these orgies of living, he experienced all the physical depression which follows a debauch; the loathing of respectable beds, of common food, of a house permeated by kitchen odours; a shuddering repulsion for the flavourless, colourless mass of everyday existence; a morbid desire for cool things and soft lights and fresh flowers.

The nearer he approached the house, the more absolutely unequal Paul felt to the sight of it all; his ugly sleeping chamber; the cold bath-room with the grimy zinc tub, the cracked mirror, the dripping spigots; his father, at the top of the stairs, his hairy legs sticking out from his night-shirt, his feet thrust into carpet slippers. He was so much later than usual that there would certainly be inquiries and reproaches. Paul stopped short before the door. He felt that he could not be accosted by his father tonight; that he could not toss again on that miserable bed. He would not go in. He would tell his father that he had no car fare, and it was raining so hard he had gone home with one of the boys and stayed all night.

Meanwhile, he was wet and cold. He went around to the back of the house and tried one of the basement windows, found it open, raised it cautiously, and scrambled down the cellar wall to the floor. There he stood, holding his breath, terrified by the noise he had made; but the floor above him was silent, and there was no creak on the stairs. He found a soap-box, and carried it over to the soft ring of light that streamed from the furnace door, and sat down. He was horribly afraid of rats, so he did not try to sleep, but sat looking distrustfully at the dark, still terrified lest he might have awakened his father. In such reactions, after one of the experiences which made days and nights out of the dreary blanks of the calendar, when his senses were deadened, Paul's head was always singularly clear. Suppose his father had heard him getting in at the window and had come down and shot him for a burglar? Then, again, suppose his father had come down, pistol in hand, and he had cried out in time to save himself, and his father had been horrified to think how nearly he had killed him? Then, again, suppose a day should come when his father would remember that night, and wish there had been no warning cry to stay his hand? With this last supposition Paul entertained himself until daybreak.

The following Sunday was fine; the sodden November chill was broken by the last flash of autumnal summer. In the morning Paul had to go to church and Sabbath-school, as always. On seasonable Sunday afternoons the burghers of Cordelia Street usually sat out on their front "stoops," and talked to their neighbors on the next stoop, or called to those across the street in neighborly fashion. The men sat placidly on gay cushions placed upon the steps that led down to the sidewalk, while the women, in their Sunday

"waists," sat in rockers on the cramped porches, pretending to be greatly at their ease. The children played in the streets; there were so many of them that the place resembled the recreation grounds of a kindergarten. The men on the steps—all in their shirt sleeves, their vests unbuttoned—sat with their legs well apart, their stomachs comfortably protruding, and talked of the prices of things, or told anecdotes of the sagacity of their various chiefs and overlords. They occasionally looked over the multitude of squabbling children, listened affectionately to their high-pitched, nasal voices, smiling to see their own proclivities reproduced in their offspring, and interspersed their legends of the iron kings with remarks about their sons' progress at school, their grades in arithmetic, and the amounts they had saved in their toy banks.

On this last Sunday of November, Paul sat all the afternoon on the lowest step of his "stoop," staring into the street, while his sisters, in their rockers, were talking to the minister's daughters next door about how many shirt-waists they had made in the last week, and how many waffles some one had eaten at the last church supper. When the weather was warm, and his father was in a particularly jovial frame of mind, the girls made lemonade, which was always brought out in a red-glass pitcher, ornamented with forget-me-nots in blue enamel. This the girls thought very fine, and the neighbors joked about the suspicious colour of the pitcher.

Today Paul's father, on the top step, was talking to a young man who shifted a restless baby from knee to knee. He happened to be the young man who was daily held up to Paul as a model, and after whom it was his father's dearest hope that he would pattern. This young man was of a ruddy complexion, with a compressed, red mouth, and faded, near-sighted eyes, over which he wore thick spectacles, with gold bows that curved about his ears. He was clerk to one of the magnates of a great steel corporation, and was looked upon in Cordelia Street as a young man with a future. There was a story that, some five years ago—he was now barely twenty-six—he had been a trifle "dissipated," but in order to curb his appetites and save the loss of time and strength that a sowing of wild oats might have entailed, he had taken his chief's advice, oft reiterated to his employes, and at twenty-one had married the first woman whom he could persuade to share his fortunes. She happened to be an angular schoolmistress, much older than he, who also wore thick glasses, and who had now borne him four children, all near-sighted, like herself.

The young man was relating how his chief, now cruising in the Mediterranean, kept in touch with all the details of the business, arranging his office hours on his yacht just as though he were at home, and "knocking off work enough to keep two stenographers busy." His father told, in turn, the plan his corporation was considering, of putting in an electric railway plant at Cairo. Paul snapped his teeth; he had an awful apprehension that they might spoil it all before he got there. Yet he rather liked to hear these legends of the iron kings, that were told and retold on Sundays and holidays; these stories

of palaces in Venice, yachts on the Mediterranean, and high play at Monte Carlo appealed to his fancy, and he was interested in the triumphs of cash boys who had become famous, though he had no mind for the cash-boy stage.

After supper was over, and he had helped to dry the dishes, Paul nervously asked his father whether he could go to George's to get some help in his geometry, and still more nervously asked for car fare. This latter request he had to repeat, as his father, on principle, did not like to hear requests for money, whether much or little. He asked Paul whether he could not go to some boy who lived nearer, and told him that he ought not to leave his school work until Sunday; but he gave him the dime. He was not a poor man, but he had a worthy ambition to come up in the world. His only reason for allowing Paul to usher was that he thought a boy ought to be earning a little.

Paul bounded upstairs, scrubbed the greasy odor of the dish-water from his hands with the ill-smelling soap he hated, and then shook over his fingers a few drops of violet water from the bottle he kept hidden in his drawer. He left the house with his geometry conspicuously under his arm, and the moment he got out of Cordelia Street and boarded a downtown car, he shook off the lethargy of two deadening days, and began to live again.

The leading juvenile of the permanent stock company which played at one of the downtown theatres was an acquaintance of Paul's, and the boy had been invited to drop in at the Sunday night rehearsals whenever he could. For more than a year Paul had spent every available moment loitering about Charley Edwards's dressing-room. He had won a place among Edwards's following not only because the young actor, who could not afford to employ a dresser, often found him useful, but because he recognized in Paul something akin to what churchmen term "vocation."

It was at the theatre and at Carnegie Hall that Paul really lived; the rest was but a sleep and a forgetting. This was Paul's fairy tale, and it had for him all the allurements of a secret love. The moment he inhaled the gassy, painty, dusty odor behind the scenes, he breathed like a prisoner set free, and felt within him the possibility of doing or saying splendid, brilliant things. The moment the cracked orchestra beat out the overture from *Martha*, or jerked at the serenade from *Rigoletto*, all stupid and ugly things slid from him, and his senses were deliciously, yet delicately fired.

Perhaps it was because, in Paul's world, the natural nearly always wore the guise of ugliness, that a certain element of artificiality seemed to him necessary in beauty. Perhaps it was because his experience of life elsewhere was so full of Sabbath-school picnics, petty economics, wholesome advice as to how to succeed in life, and the unescapable odors of cooking, that he found this existence so alluring, these smartly clad men and women so attractive, that he was so moved by these starry apple orchards that bloomed perennially under the limelight.

It would be difficult to put it strongly enough how convincingly the stage

entrance of that theatre was for Paul the actual portal of Romance. Certainly none of the company ever suspected it, least of all Charley Edwards. It was very like the old stories that used to float about London of fabulously rich Jews, who had subterranean halls, with palms, and fountains, and soft lamps and richly appanelled women who never saw the disenchanting light of London day. So, in the midst of that smoke-palled city, enamoured of figures and grimy toil, Paul had his secret temple, his wishing-carpet, his bit of blue-and-white Mediterranean shore bathed in perpetual sunshine.

Several of Paul's teachers had a theory that his imagination had been perverted by garish fiction; but the truth was, he scarcely ever read at all. The books at home were not such as would either tempt or corrupt a youthful mind, and as for reading the novels that some of his friends urged upon him—well, he got what he wanted much more quickly from music; any sort of music, from an orchestra to a barrel organ. He needed only the spark, the indescribable thrill that made his imagination master of his senses, and he could make plots and pictures enough of his own. It was equally true that he was not stage-struck—not, at any rate, in the usual acceptation of that expression. He had no desire to become an actor, any more than he had to become a musician. He felt no necessity to do any of these things; what he wanted was to see, to be in the atmosphere, float on the wave of it, to be carried out, blue league after blue league, away from everything.

After a night behind the scenes, Paul found the school-room more than ever repulsive; the hard floors and naked walls; the prosy men who never wore frock coats, or violets in their buttonholes; the women with their dull gowns, shrill voices, and pitiful seriousness about prepositions that govern the dative. He could not bear to have the other pupils think, for a moment, that he took these people seriously; he must convey to them that he considered it all trivial, and was there only by way of a joke, anyway. He had autographed pictures of all the members of the stock company, which he showed his classmates, telling them the most incredible stories of his familiarity with these people, of his acquaintance with the soloists who came to Carnegie Hall, his suppers with them and the flowers he sent them. When these stories lost their effect, and his audience grew listless, he would bid all the boys good-bye, announcing that he was going to travel for a while, going to Naples, to California, to Egypt. Then, next Monday, he would slip back, conscious and nervously smiling; his sister was ill, and he would have to defer his voyage until spring.

Matters went steadily worse with Paul at school. In the itch to let his instructors know how heartily he despised them, and how thoroughly he was appreciated elsewhere, he mentioned once or twice that he had no time to fool with theorems, adding—with a twitch of the eyebrows and a touch of that nervous bravado which so perplexed them—that he was helping the people down at the stock company; they were old friends of his.

The upshot of the matter was that the Principal went to Paul's father, and

Paul was taken out of school and put to work. The manager at Carnegie Hall was told to get another usher in his stead; the doorkeeper at the theatre was warned not to admit him to the house; and Charley Edwards remorsefully promised the boy's father not to see him again.

The members of the stock company were vastly amused when some of Paul's stories reached them—especially the women. They were hard-working women, most of them supporting indolent husbands or brothers, and they laughed rather bitterly at having stirred the boy to such fervid and florid inventions. They agreed with the faculty and with his father, that Paul's was a bad case.

The east-bound train was ploughing through a January snow-storm; the dull dawn was beginning to show gray when the engine whistled a mile out of Newark. Paul started up from the seat where he had lain curled in uneasy slumber, rubbed the breath-misted window glass with his hand, and peered out. The snow was whirling in curling eddies above the white bottom lands, and the drifts lay already deep in the fields and along the fences, while here and there the long dead grass and dried weed stalks protruded black above it. Lights shone from the scattered houses, and a gang of laborers who stood beside the track waved their lanterns.

Paul had slept very little, and he felt grimy and uncomfortable. He had made the all-night journey in a day coach because he was afraid if he took a Pullman he might be seen by some Pittsburgh business man who had noticed him in Denny & Carson's office. When the whistle woke him, he clutched quickly at his breast pocket, glancing about him with an uncertain smile. But the little, clay-bespattered Italians were still sleeping, the slatternly women across the aisle were in open-mouthed oblivion, and even the crumby, crying babies were for the nonce stilled. Paul settled back to struggle with his impatience as best he could.

When he arrived at the Jersey City Station, he hurried through his breakfast, manifestly ill at ease and keeping a sharp eye about him. After he reached the Twenty-third Street Station, he consulted a cabman, and had himself driven to a men's furnishing establishment which was just opening for the day. He spent upward of two hours there, buying with endless reconsidering and great care. His new street suit he put on in the fitting-room; the frock coat and dress clothes he had bundled into the cab with his new shirts. Then he drove to a hatter's and a shoe house. His next errand was at Tiffany's, where he selected silver-mounted brushes and a scarf-pin. He would not wait to have his silver marked, he said. Lastly, he stopped at a trunk shop on Broadway, and had his purchases packed into various travelling bags.

It was a little after one o'clock when he drove up to the Waldorf, and, after settling with the cabman, went into the office. He registered from Washington, said his mother and father had been abroad, and that he had come down to await the arrival of their steamer. He told his story plausibly and

had no trouble, since he offered to pay for them in advance, in engaging his rooms: a sleeping-room, sitting-room and bath.

Not once, but a hundred times Paul had planned this entry into New York. He had gone over every detail of it with Charley Edwards, and in his scrapbook at home there were pages of description about New York hotels, cut from the Sunday papers.

When he was shown to his sitting-room on the eighth floor, he saw at a glance that everything was as it should be; there was but one detail in his mental picture that the place did not realize, so he rang for the bell boy and sent him down for flowers. He moved about nervously until the boy returned, putting away his new linen and fingering it delightedly as he did so. When the flowers came, he put them hastily into water, and then tumbled into a hot bath. Presently he came out of his white bath-room, resplendent in his new silk underwear, and playing with the tassels of his red robe. The snow was whirling so fiercely outside his windows that he could scarcely see across the street; but within, the air was deliciously soft and fragrant. He put the violets and jonquils on the taboret beside the couch, and threw himself down with a long sigh, covering himself with a Roman blanket. He was thoroughly tired; he had been in such haste, he had stood up to such a strain, covered so much ground in the last twenty-four hours, that he wanted to think how it had all come about. Lulled by the sound of the wind, the warm air, and the cool fragrance of the flowers, he sank into deep, drowsy retrospection.

It had been wonderfully simple; when they had shut him out of the theatre and concert hall, when they had taken away his bone, the whole thing was virtually determined. The rest was a mere matter of opportunity. The only thing that at all surprised him was his own courage—for he realized well enough that he had always been tormented by fear, a sort of apprehensive dread that, of late years, as the meshes of the lies he had told closed about him, had been pulling the muscles of his body tighter and tighter. Until now, he could not remember a time when he had not been dreading something. Even when he was a little boy, it was always there—behind him, or before, or on either side. There had always been the shadowed corner, the dark place into which he dared not look, but from which something seemed always to be watching him—and Paul had done things that were not pretty to watch, he knew.

But now he had a curious sense of relief, as though he had at last thrown down the gauntlet to the thing in the corner.

Yet it was but a day since he had been sulking in the traces; but yesterday afternoon that he had been sent to the bank with Denny & Carson's deposit as usual—but this time he was instructed to leave the book to be balanced. There was above two thousand dollars in checks, and nearly a thousand in the bank notes which he had taken from the book and quietly transferred to his pocket. At the bank he had made out a new deposit slip. His nerves had been steady enough to permit of his returning to the office, where he had finished

his work and asked for a full day's holiday tomorrow, Saturday, giving a perfectly reasonable pretext. The bank book, he knew, would not be returned before Monday or Tuesday, and his father would be out of town for the next week. From the time he slipped the bank notes into his pocket until he boarded the night train for New York, he had not known a moment's hesitation.

How astonishingly easy it had all been; here he was, the thing done; and this time there would be no awakening, no figure at the top of the stairs. He watched the snow flakes whirling by his window until he fell asleep.

When he awoke, it was four o'clock in the afternoon. He bounded up with a start; one of his precious days gone already! He spent nearly an hour in dressing, watching every stage of his toilet carefully in the mirror. Everything was quite perfect; he was exactly the kind of boy he had always wanted to be.

When he went downstairs, Paul took a carriage and drove up Fifth Avenue toward the Park. The snow had somewhat abated; carriages and tradesmen's wagons were hurrying soundlessly to and fro in the winter twilight; boys in woollen mufflers were shovelling off the doorsteps; the avenue stages made fine spots of color against the white street. Here and there on the corners were stands, with whole flower gardens blooming behind glass windows, against which the snow flakes stuck and melted; violets, roses, carnations, lilies of the valley—somehow vastly more lovely and alluring that they blossomed thus unnaturally in the snow. The Park itself was a wonderful stage winter-piece.

When he returned, the pause of the twilight had ceased, and the tune of the streets had changed. The snow was falling faster, lights streamed from the hotels that reared their many stories fearlessly up into the storm, defying the raging Atlantic winds. A long, black stream of carriages poured down the avenue, intersected here and there by other streams, tending horizontally. There were a score of cabs about the entrance of his hotel, and his driver had to wait. Boys in livery were running in and out of the awning stretched across the sidewalk, up and down the red velvet carpet laid from the door to the street. Above, about, within it all, was the rumble and roar, the hurry and toss of thousands of human beings as hot for pleasure as himself, and on every side of him towered the glaring affirmation of the omnipotence of wealth.

The boy set his teeth and drew his shoulders together in a spasm of realization; the plot of all dramas, the text of all romances, the nerve-stuff of all sensations were whirling about him like the snow flakes. He burnt like a faggot in a tempest.

When Paul came down to dinner, the music of the orchestra floated up the elevator shaft to greet him. As he stepped into the thronged corridor, he sank back into one of the chairs against the wall to get his breath. The lights, the chatter, the perfumes, the bewildering medley of color—he had, for a moment, the feeling of not being able to stand it. But only for a moment;



these were his own people, he told himself. He went slowly about the corridors, through the writing-rooms, smoking-rooms, reception-rooms, as though he were exploring the chambers of an enchanted palace, built and peopled for him alone.

When he reached the dining-room he sat down at a table near a window. The flowers, the white linen, the many-colored wine glasses, the gay toilettes of the women, the low popping of corks, the undulating repetitions of the *Blue Danube* from the orchestra, all flooded Paul's dream with bewildering radiance. When the roseate tinge of his champagne was added—that cold, precious bubbling stuff that creamed and foamed in his glass—Paul wondered that there were honest men in the world at all. This was what all the world was fighting for, he reflected; this was what all the struggle was about. He doubted the reality of his past. Had he ever known a place called Cordelia Street, a place where fagged-looking business men boarded the early car? Mere rivets in a machine they seemed to Paul,—sickening men, with combings of children's hair always hanging to their coats, and the smell of cooking in their clothes. Cordelia Street—Ah, that belonged to another time and country! Had he not always been thus, had he not sat here night after night, from as far back as he could remember, looking pensively over just such shimmering textures, and slowly twirling the stem of a glass like this one between his thumb and middle finger? He rather thought he had.

He was not in the least abashed or lonely. He had no especial desire to meet or to know any of these people; all he demanded was the right to look on and conjecture, to watch the pageant. The mere stage properties were all he contended for. Nor was he lonely later in the evening, in his loge at the Opera. He was entirely rid of his nervous misgivings, of his forced aggressiveness, of the imperative desire to show himself different from his surroundings. He felt now that his surroundings explained him. Nobody questioned his purple; he had only to wear it passively. He had only to glance down at his dress coat to reassure himself that here it would be impossible for any one to humiliate him.

He found it hard to leave his beautiful sitting-room to go to bed that night, and sat long watching the raging storm from his turret window. When he went to sleep, it was with the lights turned on in his bedroom, partly because of his old timidity, and partly so that, if he should wake in the night, there would be no wretched moment of doubt, no horrible suspicion of yellow wall-paper, or of Washington and Calvin above his bed.

On Sunday morning the city was practically snow-bound. Paul breakfasted late, and in the afternoon he fell in with a wild San Francisco boy, a freshman at Yale, who said he had run down for a "little flyer" over Sunday. The young man offered to show Paul the night side of the town, and the two boys went off together after dinner, not returning to the hotel until seven o'clock the next morning. They had started out in the confiding warmth of a champagne friendship, but their parting in the elevator was singularly cool.

The freshman pulled himself together to make his train, and Paul went to bed. He awoke at two o'clock in the afternoon, very thirsty and dizzy, and rang for ice-water, coffee, and the Pittsburgh papers.

On the part of the hotel management, Paul excited no suspicion. There was this to be said for him, that he wore his spoils with dignity and in no way made himself conspicuous. His chief greediness lay in his ears and eyes, and his excesses were not offensive ones. His dearest pleasures were the gray winter twilights in his sitting-room, his quiet enjoyment of his flowers, his clothes, his wide divan, his cigarette and his sense of power. He could not remember a time when he had felt so at peace with himself. The mere release from the necessity of petty lying, lying every day and every day, restored his self-respect. He had never lied for pleasure, even at school; but to make himself noticed and admired, to assert his difference from other Cordelia Street boys; and he felt a good deal more manly, more honest, even, now that he had no need for boastful pretensions, now that he could, as his actor friends used to say, "dress the part." It was characteristic that remorse did not occur to him. His golden days went by without a shadow, and he made each as perfect as he could.

On the eighth day after his arrival in New York, he found the whole affair exploited in the Pittsburgh papers, exploited with a wealth of detail which indicated that local news of a sensational nature was at a low ebb. The firm of Denny & Carson announced that the boy's father had refunded the full amount of his theft, and that they had no intention of prosecuting. The Cumberland minister had been interviewed, and expressed his hope of yet reclaiming the motherless lad, and Paul's Sabbath-school teacher declared that she would spare no effort to that end. The rumor had reached Pittsburgh that the boy had been seen in a New York hotel, and his father had gone East to find him and bring him home.

Paul had just come in to dress for dinner; he sank into a chair, weak in the knees, and clasped his head in his hands. It was to be worse than jail, even; the tepid waters of Cordelia Street were to close over him finally and forever. The gray monotony stretched before him in hopeless, unrelieved years; Sabbath school, Young People's Meeting, the yellow-papered room, the damp dish-towels; it all rushed back upon him with sickening vividness. He had the old feeling that the orchestra had suddenly stopped, the sinking sensation that the play was over. The sweat broke out on his face, and he sprang to his feet, looked about him with his white, conscious smile, and winked at himself in the mirror. With something of the childish belief in miracles with which he had so often gone to class, all his lessons unlearned, Paul dressed and dashed whistling down the corridor to the elevator.

He had no sooner entered the dining-room and caught the measure of the music than his remembrance was lightened by his old elastic power of claiming the moment, mounting with it, and finding it all sufficient. The glare and glitter about him, the mere scenic accessories had again, and for the last

time, their old potency. He would show himself that he was game, he would finish the thing splendidly. He doubted, more than ever, the existence of Cordelia Street, and for the first time he drank his wine recklessly. Was he not, after all, one of these fortunate beings? Was he not still himself, and in his own place? He drummed a nervous accompaniment to the music and looked about him, telling himself over and over that it had paid.

He reflected drowsily, to the swell of the violin and the chill sweetness of his wine, that he might have done it more wisely. He might have caught an outbound steamer and been well out of their clutches before now. But the other side of the world had seemed too far away and too uncertain then; he could not have waited for it; his need had been too sharp. If he had to choose over again, he would do the same thing tomorrow. He looked affectionately about the dining-room, now gilded with a soft mist. Ah, it had paid indeed!

Paul was awakened next morning by a painful throbbing in his head and feet. He had thrown himself across the bed without undressing, and had slept with his shoes on. His limbs and hands were lead-heavy, and his tongue and throat were parched. There came upon him one of those fateful attacks of clear-headedness that never occurred except when he was physically exhausted and his nerves hung loose. He lay still and closed his eyes and let the tide of realities wash over him.

His father was in New York; "stopping at some joint or other," he told himself. The memory of successive summers on the front stoop fell upon him like a weight of black water. He had not a hundred dollars left; and he knew now, more than ever, that money was everything, the wall that stood between all he loathed and all he wanted. The thing was winding itself up; he had thought of that on his first glorious day in New York, and had even provided a way to snap the thread. It lay on his dressing-table now; he had got it out last night when he came blindly up from dinner,—but the shiny metal hurt his eyes, and he disliked the look of it, anyway.

He rose and moved about with a painful effort, succumbing now and again to attacks of nausea. It was the old depression exaggerated; all the world had become Cordelia Street. Yet somehow he was not afraid of anything, was absolutely calm; perhaps because he had looked into the dark corner at last, and knew. It was bad enough, what he saw there; but somehow not so bad as his long fear of it had been. He saw everything clearly now. He had a feeling that he had made the best of it, that he had lived the sort of life he was meant to live, and for half an hour he sat staring at the revolver. But he told himself that was not the way, so he went downstairs and took a cab to the ferry.

When Paul arrived at Newark, he got off the train and took another cab, directing the driver to follow the Pennsylvania tracks out of the town. The snow lay heavy on the roadways and had drifted deep in the open fields. Only here and there the dead grass or dried weed stalks projected, singularly black, above it. Once well into the country, Paul dismissed the carriage and walked, floundering along the tracks, his mind a medley of irrelevant things. He

seemed to hold in his brain an actual picture of everything he had seen that morning. He remembered every feature of both his drivers, the toothless old woman from whom he had bought the red flowers in his coat, the agent from whom he had got his ticket, and all of his fellow-passengers on the ferry. His mind, unable to cope with vital matters near at hand, worked feverishly and deftly at sorting and grouping these images. They made for him a part of the ugliness of the world, of the ache in his head, and the bitter burning on his tongue. He stooped and put a handful of snow into his mouth as he walked, but that, too, seemed hot. When he reached a little hillside, where the tracks ran through a cut some twenty feet below him, he stopped and sat down.

The carnations in his coat were drooping with the cold, he noticed; all their red glory over. It occurred to him that all the flowers he had seen in the show windows that first night must have gone the same way, long before this. It was only one splendid breath they had, in spite of their brave mockery at the winter outside the glass. It was a losing game in the end, it seemed, this revolt against the homilies by which the world is run. Paul took one of the blossoms carefully from his coat and scooped a little hole in the snow, where he covered it up. Then he dozed a while, from his weak condition, seeming insensible to the cold.

The sound of an approaching train woke him, and he started to his feet, remembering only his resolution, and afraid lest he should be too late. He stood watching the approaching locomotive, his teeth chattering, his lips drawn away from them in a frightened smile; once or twice he glanced nervously sidewise, as though he were being watched. When the right moment came, he jumped. As he fell, the folly of his haste occurred to him with merciless clearness, the vastness of what he had left undone. There flashed through his brain, clearer than ever before, the blue of Adriatic water, the yellow of Algerian sands.

He felt something strike his chest,—his body was being thrown swiftly through the air, on and on, immeasurably far and fast, while his limbs gently relaxed. Then, because the picture-making mechanism was crushed, the disturbing visions flashed into black, and Paul dropped back into the immense design of things.

## MAN AGAINST THE SEA

(*From Typhoon*)

*Joseph Conrad (1902)*

JUKES was as ready a man as any half-dozen young mates that may be caught by casting a net upon the waters; and though he had been somewhat taken aback by the startling viciousness of the first squall, he had pulled himself together on the instant, had called out the hands and had rushed them along

to secure such openings about the deck as had not been already battened down earlier in the evening. Shouting in his fresh, stentorian voice, "Jump, boys, and bear a hand!" he led in the work, telling himself the while that he had "just expected this."

But at the same time he was growing aware that this was rather more than he had expected. From the first stir of the air felt on his cheek the gale seemed to take upon itself the accumulated impetus of an avalanche. Heavy sprays enveloped the *Nan-Shan* from stem to stern, and instantly, in the midst of her regular rolling, she began to jerk and plunge as though she had gone mad with fright.

Jukes thought, "This is no joke." While he was exchanging explanatory yells with his captain, a sudden lowering of the darkness came upon the night, falling before their vision like something palpable. It was as if the masked lights of the world had been turned down. Jukes was uncritically glad to have his captain at hand. It relieved him as though that man had, by simply coming on deck, taken most of the gale's weight upon his shoulders. Such is the prestige, the privilege, and the burden of command.

Captain MacWhirr could expect no relief of that sort from any one on earth. Such is the loneliness of command. He was trying to see, with that watchful manner of a seaman who stares into the wind's eye as if into the eye of an adversary, to penetrate the hidden intention and guess the aim and force of the thrust. The strong wind swept at him out of a vast obscurity; he felt under his feet the uneasiness of his ship, and he could not even discern the shadow of her shape. He wished it were not so; and very still he waited, feeling stricken by a blind man's helplessness.

To be silent was natural to him, dark or shine. Jukes, at his elbow, made himself heard yelling cheerily in the gusts, "We must have got the worst of it at once, sir." A faint burst of lightning quivered all round, as if flashed into a cavern—into a black and secret chamber of the sea, with a floor of foaming crests.

It unveiled for a sinister, fluttering moment a ragged mass of clouds hanging low, the lurch of the long outlines of the ship, the black figures of men caught on the bridge, heads forward as if petrified in the act of butting. The darkness palpitated down upon all this, and then the real thing came at last.

It was something formidable and swift, like the sudden smashing of a vial of wrath. It seemed to explode all round the ship with an overpowering concussion and a rush of great waters, as if an immense dam had been blown up to windward. In an instant the men lost touch of each other. This is the disintegrating power of a great wind: it isolates one from one's kind. An earthquake, a landslip, an avalanche, overtake a man incidentally, as it were—without passion. A furious gale attacks him like a personal enemy, tries to grasp his limbs, fasten upon his mind, seeks to rout his very spirit out of him.

Jukes was driven away from his commander. He fancied himself whirled a great distance through the air. Everything disappeared—even, for a moment, his power of thinking; but his hand had found one of the rail-stanchions. His distress was by no means alleviated by an inclination to disbelieve the reality of this experience. Though young, he had seen some bad weather, and had never doubted his ability to imagine the worst; but this was so much beyond his powers of fancy that it appeared incompatible with the existence of any ship whatever. He would have been incredulous about himself in the same way, perhaps, had he not been so harassed by the necessity of exerting a wrestling effort against a force trying to tear him away from his hold. Moreover, the conviction of not being utterly destroyed returned to him through the sensations of being half-drowned, bestially shaken, and partly choked.

It seemed to him he remained there precariously alone with the stanchion for a long, long time. The rain poured on him, flowed, drove in sheets. He breathed in gasps; and sometimes the water he swallowed was fresh and sometimes it was salt. For the most part he kept his eyes shut tight, as if suspecting his sight might be destroyed in the immense flurry of the elements. When he ventured to blink hastily, he derived some moral support from the green gleam of the starboard light shining feebly upon the flight of rain and sprays. He was actually looking at it when its ray fell upon the uprearing sea which put it out. He saw the head of the wave topple over, adding the mite of its crash to the tremendous uproar raging around him, and almost at the same instant the stanchion was wrenched away from his embracing arms. After a crushing thump on his back he found himself suddenly afloat and borne upwards. His first irresistible notion was that the whole China Sea had climbed on the bridge. Then, more sanely, he concluded himself gone overboard. All the time he was being tossed, flung, and rolled in great volumes of water, he kept on repeating mentally, with the utmost precipitation, the words: "My God! My God! My God! My God!"

All at once, in a revolt of misery and despair, he formed the crazy resolution to get out of that. And he began to thresh about with his arms and legs. But as soon as he commenced his wretched struggles he discovered that he had become somehow mixed up with a face, an oilskin coat, somebody's boots. He clawed ferociously all these things in turn, lost them, found them again, lost them once more, and finally was himself caught in the firm clasp of a pair of stout arms. He returned the embrace closely round a thick solid body. He had found his captain.

They tumbled over and over, tightening their hug. Suddenly the water let them down with a brutal bang; and, stranded against the side of the wheelhouse, out of breath and bruised, they were left to stagger up in the wind and hold on where they could.

Jukes came out of it rather horrified, as though he had escaped some unparalleled outrage directed at his feelings. It weakened his faith in him-

self. He started shouting aimlessly to the man he could feel near him in that fiendish blackness, "Is it you, sir? Is it you, sir?" till his temples seemed ready to burst. And he heard in answer a voice, as if crying far away, as if screaming to him fretfully from a very great distance, the one word "Yes!" Other seas swept again over the bridge. He received them defencelessly right over his bare head, with both his hands engaged in holding.

The motion of the ship was extravagant. Her lurches had an appalling helplessness: she pitched as if taking a header into a void, and seemed to find a wall to hit every time. When she rolled she fell on her side headlong, and she would be righted back by such a demolishing blow that Jukes felt her reeling as a clubbed man reels before he collapses. The gale howled and scuffled about gigantically in the darkness, as though the entire world were one black gully. At certain moments the air streamed against the ship as if sucked through a tunnel with a concentrated solid force of impact that seemed to lift her clean out of the water and keep her up for an instant with only a quiver running through her from end to end. And then she would begin her tumbling again as if dropped back into a boiling caldron. Jukes tried hard to compose his mind and judge things coolly.

The sea, flattened down in the heavier gusts, would uprise and overwhelm both ends of the *Nan-Shan* in snowy rushes of foam, expanding wide, beyond both rails, into the night. And on this dazzling sheet, spread under the blackness of the clouds and emitting a bluish glow, Captain MacWhirr could catch a desolate glimpse of a few tiny specks black as ebony, the tops of the hatches, the battened companions, the heads of all the covered winches, the foot of a mast. This was all he could see of his ship. Her middle structure, covered by the bridge which bore him, his mate, the closed wheelhouse where a man was steering shut up with the fear of being swept overboard together with the whole thing in one great crash—her middle structure was like a half-tide rock awash upon a coast. It was like an outlying rock with the water boiling up, streaming over, pouring off, beating round—like a rock in the surf to which shipwrecked people cling before they let go—only it rose, it sank, it rolled continuously, without respite and rest, like a rock that should have miraculously struck adrift from a coast and gone wallowing upon the sea.

The *Nan-Shan* was being looted by the storm with a senseless, destructive fury: trysails torn out of the extra gaskets, double-lashed awnings blown away, bridge swept clean, weather-clothes burst, rails twisted, light-screens smashed—and two of the boats had gone already. They had gone unheard and unseen, melting, as it were, in the shock and smother of the wave. It was only later, when, upon the white flash of another high sea hurling itself amidships, Jukes had a vision of two pairs of davits leaping black and empty out of the solid blackness, with one overhauled fall flying and an iron-bound block capering in the air, that he became aware of what had happened within about three yards of his back.

He poked his head forward, groping for the ear of his commander. His lips touched it—big, fleshy, very wet. He cried in an agitated tone, "Our boats are going now, sir."

And again he heard that voice, forced and ringing feebly, but with a penetrating effect of quietness in the enormous discord of noises, as if sent out from some remote spot of peace beyond the black wastes of the gale; again he heard a man's voice—the frail and indomitable sound that can be made to carry an infinity of thought, resolution and purpose, that shall be pronouncing confident words on the last day, when heavens fall, and justice is done—again he heard it, and it was crying to him, as if from very, very far—"All right."

He thought he had not managed to make himself understood. "Our boats—I say boats—the boats, sir! Two gone!"

The same voice, within a foot of him and yet so remote, yelled sensibly, "Can't be helped."

Captain MacWhirr had never turned his face, but Jukes caught some more words on the wind.

"What can—expect—when hammering through—such—— Bound to leave—something behind—stands to reason."

Watchfully Jukes listened for more. No more came. This was all Captain MacWhirr had to say; and Jukes could picture to himself rather than see the broad squat back before him. An impenetrable obscurity pressed down upon the ghostly glimmers of the sea. A dull conviction seized upon Jukes that there was nothing to be done.

If the steering-gear did not give way, if the immense volumes of water did not burst the deck in or smash one of the hatches, if the engines did not give up, if way could be kept on the ship against this terrific wind, and she did not bury herself in one of these awful seas, of whose white crests alone, topping high above her bows, he could now and then get a sickening glimpse—then there was a chance of her coming out of it. Something within him seemed to turn over, bringing uppermost the feeling that the *Nan-Shan* was lost.

"She's done for," he said to himself, with a surprising mental agitation, as though he had discovered an unexpected meaning in this thought. One of these things was bound to happen. Nothing could be prevented now, and nothing could be remedied. The men on board did not count, and the ship could not last. This weather was too impossible.

Jukes felt an arm thrown heavily over his shoulders; and to this overture he responded with great intelligence by catching hold of his captain round the waist.

They stood clasped thus in the blind night, bracing each other against the wind, cheek to cheek and lip to ear, in the manner of two hulks lashed stern to stern together.



## THE STREET OF THE DAY

*(From The Web and the Rock)**Thomas Wolfe (1939)*

WHEN George Webber was a child, Locust Street, the street on which he lived with his Joyner relatives, seemed fixed for him into the substance of immemorial antiquity. It had a beginning and a history, he had no doubt, but a history that began so long ago that countless men had come and lived and died and been forgotten since the street began, and no man living could remember when that was. Moreover, it seemed to him that every house and tree and garden had been framed to the pattern of an immutable design: they were there because they had to be there, they were built that way because that was the only way in which they could be built.

This street held for him a universe of joy and magic which seemed abundant for a thousand lives. Its dimensions were noble in their space and limitless surprise. Its world of houses, yards, and orchards and its hundred people seemed to him to have the incomparable grandeur of the first place on earth, the impregnable authority of the center of the universe.

In later years, George plainly saw that the world in which he lived had been a little place. All of the dimensions of the street had dwindled horribly. The houses that had seemed so imposing in their opulence and grandeur, the lawns that were so spacious, the backyards and the vistaed orchards that went on in limitless progressions of delight and new discovery that never had an end—all this had shrunk pitifully, incredibly, and now looked close, and mean, and cramped. Yet even then, years later, the street and all its million memories of a buried life awoke for him with the blazing and intolerable vividness of a dream. It was a world which he had known and lived with every atom of his blood and brain and spirit, and every one of its thousand images was rooted into the structure of his life forever, as much a part of him as his inmost thoughts.

At first it was just the feel of the grass and the earth and the ground under your naked feet in May when you were going barefoot for the first time and walking gingerly. It was the cool feel of the sand up through your toes, and the feel of the soft tar in the streets and walking on a wall of concrete blocks, and the feel of cool, damp earth in shaded places. It was the feel of standing on the low edge of a roof or in a barn loft opening or on the second story of a house that was being built and daring another boy to jump; and looking over, waiting, knowing you must jump; and looking down, and waiting, daring, taunting, with a thudding heart, until you jumped.

And then it was the good feel of throwing a small, round, heavy stone through the window of a vacant house when the red and ancient light of evening was blazing on its windows; and it was like feeling a baseball in your hands for the first time in the spring, and its round and solid weight at the

end of your arm and the way it shot away like a bullet the first time when you threw it with a feeling of terrific power and speed and it smacked into the odorous, well-oiled pocket of the catcher's mitt. And then it was like prowling round in dark, cool cellars, thinking you would come upon a buried treasure any moment, and finding rows of cobwebbed bottles and the rusty frame of an old bicycle.

Sometimes it was like waking up on Saturday with the grand feeling of Saturday morning leaping in your heart, and seeing the apple blossoms drifting to earth, and smelling sausage and ham and coffee, and knowing there would be no school today, no dreadful, morning, schoolhouse bell today, no thudding heart, and pounding legs, and shuddering nerves and bolted and uneasy food, and sour, distressful coffee in your guts, because there would be no school today and it was golden, shining, and triumphant Saturday.

And then it was like Saturday night, and joy and menace in the air, and everyone waiting to get out on the streets and go "uptown," and taking a hot bath, and putting on clean clothes and eating supper, and going uptown on the night-time streets of Saturday, where joy and menace filled the air about you, and where glory breathed upon you, and yet never came, and getting far down towards the front and seeing Broncho Billy shoot the bad men dead three times until the last show of the night was over, and a cracked slide was shone on the screen which said "Good Night."

Then it was like Sunday morning, waking, hearing the bus outside, smelling the coffee, brains and eggs, and buckwheat cakes, feeling peaceful, sweetly happy, not exultant as on Saturday, a slumberous, drowsy, and more mournful joy, the smell of the Sunday newspapers, and the Sunday morning light outside, bright, golden, yet religious light, and church bells, people putting on good clothes to go to church, and the closed and decent streets of Sunday morning, and going by the cool side where the tobacco store was, and the Sunday morning sports inside who didn't have to go to church, and the strong, clean, pungent smell of good tobacco, and the good smell and feel of the church, which was not so much like God as like a good and decent substance in the world—the children singing, "Shall we gather at the River the Bew-tee-ful the Bew-tee-ful R-hiv-er!"—and the drone of voices from the classrooms later on, and the dark walnut, stained-glass light in the church, and decent, never-gaudy people with good dinners waiting for them when they got home, and the remote yet passionate austerity of the preacher's voice, the lean, horselike nobility of his face as he craned above his collar saying "heinous"—and all remote, austere, subdued, and decent, as if God were there in walnut light and a choker collar; and then the twenty-minute prayer, the organ pealing a rich benison, and people talking, laughing, streaming out from the dutiful, weekly, walnut disinfection of their souls into bright morning-gold of Sunday light again, and standing then in friendly and yet laughing groups upon the lawn outside, and streaming off towards home again, a steady liquid Sunday shuffle of good leather on the quiet streets—

and all of it was good and godly, yet not like God, but like an ordered destiny, like Sunday morning peace and decency, and good dinners, money in the bank, and strong security.

And then it was the huge winds in great trees at night—the remote, demented winds—the sharp, clean raining of the acorns to the earth, and a demon's whisper of evil and unbodied jubilation in your heart, speaking of triumph, flight, and darkness, new lands, morning, and a shining city.

And then it was like waking up and knowing somehow snow was there before you looked, feeling the numb, white, brooding prescience of soft-silent, all-engulfing snow around you, and then hearing it, soft, almost noiseless, fluff and fall to earth, and the scraping of a shovel on the sidewalk before the house.

And then it was like stern and iron winter, and days and nights that ate intolerably the slow grey ash of time away, and April that would never come, and waiting, waiting, waiting dreamily at night for something magical that never happened, and bare boughs that creaked and swayed in darkness, and the frozen shapes of limbs that swung stiff shadows on the street below a light, and your aunt's voice filled with the fathomless sea-depths of Joyner time and horror, and of a race that lived forever while you drowned.

And then it was like the few days that you liked school, when you began and ended in September and in June. It was like going back to school again in September and getting some joy and hope out of the book-lists that the teacher gave you the first day, and then the feel and look and smell of the new geography, the reader and the composition books, the history, and the smells of pencils, wooden rules, and paper in the bookstore, and the solid, wealthy feel of the books and bookstrap, and taking the books home and devouring them—the new, richly illustrated geography and history and reading books—devouring them with an insatiate joy and hunger until there was nothing new left in them, and getting up in the morning and hearing the morning schoolhouse bell, and hoping it would not be so bad this year after all.

And it was like waiting in May for school to end, and liking it, and feeling a little sad because it would soon be over, and like the last day when you felt quite sorrowful and yet full of an exultant joy, and watched the high school graduate, and saw the plaster casts of Minerva and Diana, the busts of Socrates, Demosthenes, and Caesar, and smelled the chalk, the ink, the school-room smells with ecstasy, and were sorry you were leaving them.

And you felt tears come into your own eyes as the class sang its graduation song with words to the tune of "Old Heidelberg," and saw the girls weeping hysterically, kissing each other and falling on the neck of Mr. Hamby, the principal, swearing they would never forget him, no, never, as long as they lived, and these had been the happiest days of their lives, and they just couldn't bear it—boo-hoo-hoo!—and then listened to the oration of the Honorable Zebulon N. Meekins, the local Congressman, telling them the

world had never seen a time when it needed leaders as it does at present and go—go—go my young friends and be a Leader in the Great World that is waiting for you and God Bless You All—and your eyes were wet, your throat was choked with joy and pain intolerable as Zebulon N. Meekins spoke these glorious words, for as he spoke them the soft, bloom-laden wind of June howled gusty for a moment at the eaves, you saw the young green of the trees outside and smelled a smell of tar and green and fields thick with the white and yellow of the daisies bending in the wind, and heard far-faint thunder on the rails, and saw the Great World then, the far-shining, golden, and enchanted city, and heard the distant, murmurous drone of all its million-footed life, and saw its fabulous towers soaring upward from an opalescent mist, and knew that some day you would walk its streets a conqueror and be a Leader among the most beautiful and fortunate people in the world; and you thought the golden tongue of Zebulon Nathaniel Meekins had done it all for you, and gave no credit to the troubling light that came and went outside, from gold to grey and back to gold again, and none to the young green of June and the thick-starred magic of the daisy fields, or to the thrilling school-house smells of chalk and ink and varnished desks, or to the thrilling mystery, joy, and sadness, the numb, delicious feel of glory in your guts—no, you gave no credit to these things at all, but thought Zeb Meekins' golden tongue had done it all to you.

And you wondered what the schoolrooms were like in summer, when no one was there, and wished that you could be there alone with your pretty, red-haired, and voluptuous-looking teacher, or with a girl in your class who sat across the aisle from you, and whose name was Edith Pickleseimer, and who had fat curls, blue eyes of sweet tranquillity, and a tender, innocent smile, and who wore short little skirts, clean blue drawers, and you could sometimes see the white and tender plumpness of her leg where the straps and garter buckles that held up her stockings pressed into it, and you thought of being here with her alone, and yet all in a pure way too.

And sometimes it was like coming home from school in October, and smelling burning leaves upon the air, and wading in the oak leaves in the gutter, and seeing men in shirt-sleeves with arm bands of a ruffled blue upon the sleeves raking the leaves together in their yards, and feeling, smelling, hearing ripeness, harvest in the air, and sometimes frost at night, silence, frost-white moonlight through the windows, the distant barking of a dog, and a great train pounding at the rails, a great train going in the night, the tolling bell, the lonely and departing whistle-wail.

These lights and shapes and tones of things swarmed in the boy's mind like a magic web of shifting, iridescent colors. For the place where he lived was not just a street to him—not just a strip of pavement and a design of weathered, shabby houses: it was the living integument of his life, the frame and stage for the whole world of childhood and enchantment.

## THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

*Walt Whitman (1855)*

THERE was a child went forth every day,  
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,  
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,  
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child, 5  
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and  
the song of the phoebe-bird,  
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's  
foal and the cow's calf,  
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,  
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beau-  
tiful curious liquid,  
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him. 10

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him,  
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent  
roots of the garden,  
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and wood-  
berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,  
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern  
whence he had lately risen,  
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school. 15  
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,  
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl,  
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in  
her womb and birth'd him,  
They gave this child more of themselves than that, 20  
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,  
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odour  
falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,  
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust.  
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure, 25  
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning  
and swelling heart,  
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the thought if  
after all it should prove unreal,  
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether  
and how,

Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?  
 Men and women crowding fast in the streets; if they are not flashes and  
 specks, what are they? 30  
 The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,  
 Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries,  
 The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between,  
 Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white or  
 brown two miles off,  
 The schooner nearby sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-  
 tow'd astern, 35  
 The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,  
 The strata of colour'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by  
 itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,  
 The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and  
 shore mud,  
 These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now  
 goes, and will always go forth every day.

## GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

*Walt Whitman (1855)*

### I

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,  
 Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,  
 Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,  
 Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape,  
 Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching  
 content, 5  
 Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi,  
 and I looking up at the stars,  
 Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk  
 undisturb'd,  
 Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never tire,  
 Give me a perfect child, give me a way aside from the noise of the world a  
 rural domestic life,  
 Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears  
 only, 10  
 Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal  
 sanities!

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and rack'd  
 by the war-strife,)  
 These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,  
 While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,  
 Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets, 15

Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me up,  
 Yet giving to make me glutt'd, enrich'd of soul, you give me forever faces.  
 (O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,  
 I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

## 2

Keep your splendid silent sun, 20  
 Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,  
 Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-fields and orchards,  
 Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees hum;  
 Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless  
 along the trottoirs!  
 Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me comrades and lovers  
 by the thousand! 25  
 Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the hand every day!  
 Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!  
 Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the  
 trumpets and drums!  
 (The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away, flush'd and  
 reckless,  
 Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks, young, yet very old, worn,  
 marching, noticing nothing;) 30  
 Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!  
 O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!  
 The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!  
 The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torchlight  
 procession!  
 The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons fol-  
 lowing; 35  
 People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,  
 Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,  
 The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets, (even the sight  
 of the wounded,)  
 Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!  
 Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me. 40

## BIRCHES

*Robert Frost (1916)*

When I see birches bend to left and right  
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.  
 Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them 5  
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
 After a rain. They click upon themselves

As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells 10  
 Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—  
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,  
 And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed 15  
 So low for long, they never right themselves:  
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground  
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair  
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun. 20  
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm  
 (Now am I free to be poetical?)  
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows— 25  
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,  
 Whose only play was what he found himself,  
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.  
 One by one he subdued his father's trees  
 By riding them down over and over again 30  
 Until he took the stiffness out of them,  
 And not one but hung limp, not one was left  
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was  
 To learn about not launching out too soon  
 And so not carrying the tree away 35  
 Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise  
 To the top branches, climbing carefully  
 With the same pains you use to fill a cup  
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.  
 Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish, 40  
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.  
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches.  
 And so I dream of going back to be.  
 It's when I'm weary of considerations,  
 And life is too much like a pathless wood 45  
 Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs  
 Broken across it, and one eye is weeping  
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.  
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile  
 And then come back to it and begin over. 50  
 May no fate willfully misunderstand me  
 And half grant what I wish and snatch me away  
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:  
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.  
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree, 55  
 And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk



Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,  
 But dipped its top and set me down again.  
 That would be good both going and coming back.  
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

60

## THE GREAT LOVER

*Rupert Brooke (1915)*

I have been so great a lover: filled my days  
 So proudly with the splendor of Love's praise,  
 The pain, the calm, the astonishment,  
 Desire illimitable, and still content,  
 And all dear names men use, to cheat despair, 5  
 For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear  
 Our hearts at random down the dark of life.  
 Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife  
 Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,  
 My night shall be remembered for a star 10  
 That outshone all the suns of all men's days.  
 Shall I not crown them with immortal praise  
 Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me  
 High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see  
 The inenarrable godhead of delight? 15  
 Love is a flame—we have beaconed the world's night;  
 A city—and we have built it, these and I;  
 An emperor—we have taught the world to die.  
 So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,  
 And the high cause of Love's magnificence, 20  
 And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names  
 Golden forever, eagles, crying flames,  
 And set them as a banner, that men may know,  
 To dare the generations, burn, and blow  
 Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. 25  
 These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
 Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faëry dust;  
 Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust  
 Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
 Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood; 30  
 And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;  
 And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,  
 Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;  
 Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon  
 Smooth away trouble and the rough male kiss 35  
 Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is  
 Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen  
 Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;

The benison of hot water; furs to touch;  
 The good smell of old clothes; and other such— 40  
 The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
 Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
 About dead leaves and last year's ferns—

Dear names,

And thousand others throng to me! Royal flames;  
 Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring; 45  
 Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing—

Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,  
 Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;  
 Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam  
 That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home; 50

And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold  
 Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mold;  
 Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;  
 And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;  
 And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass— 55  
 All these have been my loves. And these shall pass.

Whatever passes not, in the great hour,  
 Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power  
 To hold them with me through the gate of Death.  
 They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath, 60  
 Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust  
 And sacramented covenant to the dust.

—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,  
 And give what's left of Love again, and make  
 New friends, new strangers—

But the best I've known 65  
 Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown  
 About the winds of the world, and fades from brains  
 Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again  
 This one last gift I give: that after men 70  
 Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,  
 Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

## PROEM TO ENDYMION

*John Keats (1818)*

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:  
 Its loveliness increases; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. 5  
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10  
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
 Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon  
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils 15  
 With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
 That for themselves a cooling covert make  
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,  
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20  
 We have imagined for the mighty dead;  
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read:  
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences 25  
 For one short hour; no, even as the trees  
 That whisper round a temple become soon  
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
 The passion Poesy, glories infinite,  
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30  
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast  
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-cast,  
 They always must be with us, or we die.

## DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

*John Gould Fletcher (1921)*

### EMBARKATION

Dull masses of dense green,  
 The forests range their sombre platforms.  
 Between them silently, like a spirit,  
 The river finds its own mysterious path.

Loosely the river sways out, backward, forward; 5  
 Always fretting the outer side;  
 Shunning the invisible focus of each crescent,  
 Seeking to spread into shining loops over fields:

Like an enormous serpent, dilating, uncoiling,  
 Displaying a broad scaly back of earth-smeared gold; 10  
 Swaying out sinuously between the dull motionless forests,  
 As inlaid metal might glide down the lip of a vase of dark bronze.

## HEAT

As if the sun had trodden down the sky,  
 Until no more it holds air for us, but only humid vapor,  
 The heat, pressing upon earth with irresistible languor, 15  
 Turns all the solid forest into half-liquid smudge.

The heavy clouds, like cargo-boats, strain slowly up 'gainst its current;  
 And the flickering of the heat haze is like the churning of ten thousand paddles  
 Against the heavy horizon, pale blue and utterly windless,  
 Whereon the sun hangs motionless, a brassy disk of flame. 20

## FULL MOON

Flinging its arc of silver bubbles, quickly shifts the moon  
 From side to side of us as we go down its path;  
 I sit on the deck at midnight, and watch it slipping and sliding,  
 Under my tilted chair, like a thin film of spilt water.

It is weaving a river of light to take the place of this river— 25  
 A river where we shall drift all night, then come to rest in its shallows.  
 And then I shall wake from my drowsiness and look down from some dim  
 tree-top  
 Over white lakes of cotton, like moon-fields on every side.

## THE MOON'S ORCHESTRA

When the moon lights up  
 Its dull red camp-fire through the trees; 30  
 And floats out, like a white balloon,  
 Into the blue cup of the night, borne by a casual breeze;  
 The moon-orchestra then begins to stir:  
 Jiggle of fiddles commence their crazy dance in the darkness;  
 Crickets churr 35  
 Against the stark reiteration of the rusty flutes which frogs  
 Puff at from rotted logs  
 In the swamp.  
 And the moon begins her dance of frozen pomp  
 Over the lightly quivering floor of the flat and mournful river.  
 Her white feet slightly twist and swirl— 40  
 She is a mad girl  
 In an old unlit ball-room,  
 Whose walls, half-guessed-at through the gloom,  
 Are hung with the rusty crape of stark black cypresses,  
 Which show, through gaps and tatters, red stains half hidden away. 45

## THE STEVEDORES

Frieze of warm bronze that glides with cat-like movements  
Over the gang-plank poised and yet awaiting—  
The sinewy thudding rhythms of forty shuffling feet  
Falling like muffled drum-beats on the stillness:

50

*Oh, roll the cotton down—  
Roll, roll the cotton down!  
From the further side of Jordan,  
Oh, roll the cotton down!*

And the river waits,  
The river listens,  
Chuckling with little banjo-notes that break with a plop on the stillness.  
And by the low dark shed that holds the heavy freights,  
Two lonely cypress trees stand up and point with stiffened fingers  
Far southward where a single chimney stands aloof in the sky.

55

60

## NIGHT LANDING

After the whistle's roar has bellowed and shuddered,  
Shaking the sleeping town and the somnolent river,  
The deep-toned floating of the pilot's bell  
Suddenly warns the engines.

They pause like heart-beats that abruptly stop:  
The shore glides to us, in a wide low curve.

65

And then—supreme revelation of the river—  
The tackle is loosed, the long gang-plank swings outwards;  
And poised at the end of it, half naked beneath the search-light,  
A blue-black negro with gleaming teeth waits for his chance to leap.

70

## THE SILENCE

There is a silence which I carry about with me always—  
A silence perpetual, for it is self-created;  
A silence of heat, of water, of unchecked fruitfulness,  
Through which each year the heavy harvests bloom, and burst, and fall.

Deep, matted green silence of my South,  
Often, within the push and the scorn of great cities,  
I have seen that mile-wide waste of water swaying out to you,  
And on its current glimmering I am going to the sea.

75

There is a silence I have achieved—I have walked beyond its threshold.  
I know it is without horizons, boundless, fathomless, perfect.  
And some day maybe, far away,  
I shall curl up in it at last and sleep an endless sleep.

80

## COLOR

*Wilfred Wilson Gibson (1915)*

A blue-black Nubian plucking oranges  
At Jaffa by a sea of malachite,  
In red tarboosh, green sash, and flowing white  
Burnous—among the shadowy memories

That haunt me yet by these bleak  
northern seas 5  
He lives for ever in my eyes' delight,  
Bizarre, superb in young immortal  
might—  
A god of old barbaric mysteries.

Maybe he lived a life of lies and lust,  
Maybe his bones are now but scattered dust; 10  
Yet, for a moment he was life supreme  
Exultant and unchallenged: and my  
rhyme  
Would set him safely out of reach of  
time  
In that old heaven where things are  
what they seem.

## SIGHT

*Wilfred Wilson Gibson (1914)*

By the lamplit stall I loitered, feasting  
my eyes  
On colors ripe and rich for the  
heart's desire—  
Tomatoes, redder than Krakatoa's  
fire,  
Oranges like old sunsets over Tyre,  
And apples golden-green as the glades  
of Paradise.  
And as I lingered, lost in divine  
light,  
My heart thanked God for the goodly  
gift of sight  
And all youth's lively senses keen and  
quick . . .

When suddenly, behind me in the  
night,  
I heard the tapping of a blind man's  
stick. 10

## LOVELIEST OF TREES

*A. E. Housman (1896)*

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now  
Is hung with bloom along the bough,  
And stands about the woodland ride  
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,  
Twenty will not come again, 6  
And take from seventy springs a  
score,  
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room, 10  
About the woodlands I will go  
To see the cherry hung with snow.

## REVEILLE

*A. E. Housman (1896)*

Wake: the silver dusk returning  
Up the beach of darkness brims,  
And the ship of sunrise burning  
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters, 5  
Trampled to the floor it spanned,  
And the tent of night in tatters  
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:  
Hear the drums of morning play; 10  
Hark, the empty highways crying,  
"Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together,  
Forelands beacon, belfries call;  
Never lad that trod on leather 15  
Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber  
 Sunlit pallets never thrive;  
 Morns abed and daylight slumber  
 Were not meant for man alive. 20

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;  
 Breath's a ware that will not keep.  
 Up, lad: when the journey's over  
 There'll be time enough to sleep.

### CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

*Robert Herrick (1648)*

Get up, get up for shame! The bloom-  
 ing morn  
 Upon her wings presents the god un-  
 shorn.

See how Aurora throws her fair,  
 Fresh-quilted colors through the air.  
 Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see 5  
 The dew bespangling herb and tree!  
 Each flower has wept and bowed  
 toward the east

Above an hour since, yet you not  
 drest;

Nay! not so much as out of bed? 9  
 When all the birds have matins said  
 And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis  
 sin,

Nay, profanation, to keep in,  
 Whereas a thousand virgins on this  
 day

Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch  
 in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be  
 seen

To come forth, like the springtime,  
 fresh and green, 15

And sweet as Flora. Take no care  
 For jewels for your gown or hair.  
 Fear not; the leaves will strew

Gems in abundance upon you. 20

Besides, the childhood of the day has  
 kept

Against you come, some orient pearls  
 unwept.

Come, and receive them while the  
 light

Hangs on the dew-locks of the  
 night;

And Titan on the eastern hill 25

Retires himself or else stands still

Till you come forth! Wash, dress,  
 be brief in praying;

Few beads are best when once we go  
 a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and com-  
 ing, mark

How each field turns a street, each  
 street a park, 30

Made green and trimmed with  
 trees! see how

Devotion gives each house a bough  
 Or branch! each porch, each door,  
 ere this,

An ark, a tabernacle is,  
 Made up of whitethorn neatly inter-  
 wove, 35

As if here were those cooler shades  
 of love.

Can such delights be in the street  
 And open fields, and we not see't?

Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey  
 The proclamation made for May,  
 And sin no more, as we have done,  
 by staying; 41

But, my Corinna, come, let's go  
 a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this  
 day

But is got up and gone to bring in  
 May.

A deal of youth ere this is come 45  
 Back, and with whitethorn laden  
 home.

Some have dispatched their cakes  
 and cream,

Before that we have left to dream;  
 And some have wept and wooed, and  
 plighted troth,

And chose their priest, ere we can  
 cast off sloth. 50

Many a green-gown has been  
 given,

Many a kiss, both odd and even;  
 Many a glance, too, has been sent  
 From out the eye, love's firmament;  
 Many a jest told of the keys betraying 55  
 This night, and locks picked; yet  
 we're not a-Maying!

Come, let us go, while we are in our  
 prime,  
 And take the harmless folly of the  
 time!

We shall grow old apace, and die  
 Before we know our liberty. 60  
 Our life is short, and our days run  
 As fast away as does the sun.  
 And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,  
 Once lost, can ne'er be found again,  
 So when or you or I are made 65  
 A fable, song, or fleeting shade,  
 All love, all liking, all delight  
 Lies drowned with us in endless  
 night.  
 Then, while time serves, and we are  
 but decaying,  
 Come, my Corinna, come, let's go  
 a-Maying. 70

### TO HIS COY MISTRESS

*Andrew Marvell (1650)*

Had we but world enough, and time,  
 This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
 We would sit down, and think which  
 way  
 To walk, and pass our long love's day.  
 Thou by the Indian Ganges' side 5  
 Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide  
 Of Humber would complain. I would  
 Love you ten years before the flood,  
 And you should, if you please, refuse  
 Till the conversion of the Jews; 10  
 My vegetable love should grow  
 Vaster than empires and more slow;  
 An hundred years should go to praise  
 Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast, 15  
 But thirty thousand to the rest;  
 An age at least to every part,  
 And the last age should show your  
 heart.

For, lady, you deserve this state,  
 Nor would I love at lower rate. 20  
 But at my back I always hear  
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near,  
 And yonder all before us lie  
 Deserts of vast eternity. 24

Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
 My echoing song; then worms shall  
 try

That long-preserved virginity,  
 And your quaint honour turn to dust,  
 And into ashes all my lust: 30  
 The grave's a fine and private place,  
 But none, I think, do there embrace.  
 Now therefore, while the youthful  
 hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
 And while thy willing soul transpires  
 At every pore with instant fires, 36  
 Now let us sport us while we may,  
 And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
 Rather at once our time devour,  
 Than languish in his slow-chapt  
 power. 40

Let us roll all our strength and all  
 Our sweetness up into one ball,  
 And tear our pleasures with rough  
 strife,  
 Thorough the iron gates of life;  
 Thus, though we cannot make our  
 sun 45  
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

### YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

*Archibald MacLeish (1930)*

And here face down beneath the sun  
 And here upon earth's noonward  
 height  
 To feel the always coming on  
 The always rising of the night



To feel creep up, the curving east	5	And deepen on Palmyra's street	
The earthy chill of dusk and slow		The wheel rut in the ruined stone	
Upon those under lands the vast		And Lebanon fade out and Crete	
And ever climbing shadow grow		High through the clouds and over-	
		blown	
And strange at Ecbatan the trees			
Take leaf by leaf the evening		And over Sicily the air	25
strange	10	Still flashing with the landward gulls	
Take flooding dark about their knees		And loom and slowly disappear	
The mountains over Persia change		The sails above the shadowy hulls	
And now at Kermanshah the gate			
Dark empty and the withered grass		And Spain go under and the shore	
And through the twilight now the		Of Africa the gilded sand	30
late	15	And evening vanish and no more	
Few travellers in the westward pass		The low pale light across that land	
And Baghdad darken and the bridge		Nor now the long light on the sea	
Across the silent river gone		And here face downward in the sun	
And through Arabia the edge		To feel how swift how secretly	35
Of evening widen and steal on	20	The shadow of the night comes on . . .	

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

*Alfred Lord Tennyson (1832)*

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,  
 "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."  
 In the afternoon they came unto a land  
 In which it seeméd always afternoon.  
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

5

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
 And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.  
 A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,

10

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
 And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,  
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
 From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,

15

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
 Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,  
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.  
 The charméd sunset lingered low adown  
 In the red west; through mountain clefts the dale

20

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
 Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale  
 And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
 A land where all things always seemed the same!  
 And round about the keel with faces pale, 25  
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
 To each, but whoso did receive of them 30  
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
 Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave  
 On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
 And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake, 35  
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore;  
 And sweet it was to dream of fatherland,  
 Of child, and wife and slave; but evermore 40  
 Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,  
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
 Then someone said, "We will return no more";  
 And all at once they sang, "Our island home  
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam." 45

#### CHORIC SONG

##### I

There is sweet music here that softer falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50  
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.  
 Here are cool mosses deep,  
 And through the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 55  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

##### II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
 While all things else have rest from weariness?  
 All things have rest; why should we toil alone, 60  
 We only toil, who are the first of things,

And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown;  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings, 65  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
 "There is no joy but calm!"—  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70  
 The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
 Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 75  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo! sweetened with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing overmellow,  
 Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days 80  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85  
 Death is the end of life; ah, why  
 Should life all labor be?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last? 90  
 All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 95  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence—ripen, fall, and cease.  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward-stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;

To hear each other's whispered speech;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 105  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 115  
 And their warm tears; but all hath suffered change;  
 For surely now our household hearts are cold,  
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold 120  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain. 125  
 The gods are hard to reconcile;  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labor unto aged breath, 130  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly—  
 With half-dropped eyelid still, 135  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine— 140  
 To watch the emerald-colored water falling  
 Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak, 145  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek;  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone;  
 Through every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is  
 blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150  
 Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was  
 seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in  
 the sea.  
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
 On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind. 155  
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled  
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled  
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;  
 Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and  
 fiery sands, 160  
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and  
 praying hands.  
 But they smile, they find a music centered in a doleful song  
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong;  
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil, 165  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;  
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whispered—down  
 in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;  
 Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

## THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

*William Wordsworth (1806)*

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;  
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
 This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours, 5  
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
 It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be  
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

10

### EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON BEAUTY BARE

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1923)*

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty  
 bare.  
 Let all who prate of Beauty hold their  
 peace,  
 And lay them prone upon the earth  
 and cease  
 To ponder on themselves, the while  
 they stare  
 At nothing, intricately drawn no-  
 where  
 In shapes of shifting lineage; let  
 geese  
 Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek re-  
 lease  
 From dusty bondage into luminous  
 air.  
 O blinding hour, O holy, terrible  
 day,  
 When first the shaft into his vision  
 shone  
 Of light anatomized! Euclid alone  
 Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortu-  
 nate they  
 Who, though once only and then  
 but far away,  
 Have heard her massive sandal set on  
 stone.

### SPRING

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1921)*

To what purpose, April, do you re-  
 turn again?  
 Beauty is not enough.

You can no longer quiet me with the  
 redness

Of little leaves opening stickily.

I know what I know.

The sun is hot on my neck as I ob-  
 serve

The spikes of the crocus.

The smell of the earth is good.

It is apparent that there is no  
 death.

But what does that signify?

Not only under ground are the brains  
 of men

Eaten by maggots.

Life in itself

Is nothing—

An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted  
 stairs

It is not enough that yearly, down  
 this hill,

April

Comes like an idiot, babbling and  
 strewing flowers!

### IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

TO A PREACHER

*Matthew Arnold (1849)*

"In harmony with Nature?" Restless  
 fool,

Who with such heat dost preach  
 what were to thee,

When true, the last impossibility—  
 To be like Nature strong, like Nature  
 cool!

Know, man hath all which Nature  
 hath, but more,

And in that *more* lie all his hopes of  
good.

Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;  
Nature is stubborn, man would fain  
adore;

Nature is fickle, man hath need of  
rest;

Nature forgives no debt, and fears no  
grave; 10

Man would be mild, and with safe  
conscience blest.

Man must begin, know this, where  
Nature ends;

Nature and man can never be fast  
friends.

Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest  
her slave!

### TRY TROPIC

OF THE PROPERTIES OF NATURE  
FOR HEALING AN ILLNESS

*Genevieve Taggard (1928)*

Try tropic for your balm,

Try storm,

And after storm, calm.

Try snow of heaven, heavy, soft and  
slow,

Brilliant and warm. 5

Nothing will help, and nothing do  
much harm.

Drink iron from rare springs; follow  
the sun;

Go far

To get the beam of some medicinal  
star;

Or in your anguish run 10

The gauntlet of all zones to an ulti-  
mate one.

Fever and chill

Punish you still,

Earth has no zone to work against  
your ill.

Burn in the jewelled desert with the  
toad. 15

Catch lace

Of evening mist across your haunted  
face;

Or walk in upper air, the slanted  
road.

It will not lift that load;

Nor will large seas undo your subtle  
ill. 20

Nothing can cure and nothing kill

What ails your eyes, what cuts your  
pulse in two

And not kill you.

### I HEAR THE CRIES OF EVENING

*Stephen Spender (1934)*

I hear the cries of evening, while the  
paw

Of dark creeps up the turf;  
Sheep's bleating, swaying gulls' cry,  
the rock's caw,

The hammering surf.

I am inconstant yet this constancy 5  
Of natural rest twangs at my heart;

Town-bred, I feel the roots of each  
earth-cry

Tear me apart.

These are the creakings of the dusty  
day

When the dog night bites sharp, 10  
These fingers grip my soul and tear

away

And pluck me like a harp.

I feel this huge sphere turn, the great  
wheel sing

While beasts move to their ease:

Sheep's love, gulls' peace—I feel my  
chattering 15

Uncared by these.

## PRAIRIE

*Carl Sandburg (1918)*

I was born on the prairie and the milks of its wheat, the red of its clover, the eyes of its women, gave me a song and a slogan.

Here the water went down, the icebergs slid with gravel, the gaps and the valleys hissed, and the black loam came, and the yellow sandy loam.

Here between the sheds of the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachians, here now a morning star fixes a fire sign over the timber claims and cow pastures, the corn belt, the cotton belt, the cattle ranches.

Here the gray geese go five hundred miles and back with a wind under their wings honking the cry for a new home.

Here I know I will hanker after nothing so much as one more sunrise or a sky moon of fire doubled to a river moon of water. 5

The prairie sings to me in the forenoon and I know in the night I rest easy in the prairie arms, on the prairie heart.

After the sunburn of the day  
handling a pitchfork at a hayrack,  
after the eggs and biscuit and coffee,  
the pearl-gray haystacks 10  
in the gloaming  
are cool prayers  
to the harvest hands.

In the city among the walls the overland passenger train is choked and the pistons hiss and the wheels curse.

On the prairie the overland flits on phantom wheels and the sky and the soil between them muffle the pistons and cheer the wheels. 15

I am here when the cities are gone.

I am here before the cities come.

I nourish the lonely men on horses.

I will keep the laughing men who ride iron.

I am dust of men.

The running water babbled to the deer, the cottontail, the gopher.

You came in wagons, making streets and schools,

Kin of the ax and rifle, kin of the plow and horse,

Singing *Yankee Doodle*, *Old Dan Tucker*, *Turkey in the Straw*,

You in the coonskin cap at a log house door hearing a lone wolf howl, 25

You at a sod house door reading the blizzards and chinooks let loose from Medicine Hat,



I am dust of your dust, as I am brother and mother  
To the copper faces, the worker in flint and clay,  
The singing women and their sons a thousand years ago  
Marching single file the timber and the plain. 30

I hold the dust of these amid changing stars.  
I last while old wars are fought, while peace broods mother-like,  
While new wars arise and the fresh killings of young men.  
I fed the boys who went to France in great dark days.  
Appomattox is a beautiful word to me and so is Valley Forge and the Marne  
and Verdun, 35

I who have seen the red births and the red deaths  
Of sons and daughters, I take peace or war, I say nothing and wait.  
Have you seen a red sunset drip over one of my cornfields, the shore of night  
stars, the wave lines of dawn up a wheat valley?  
Have you heard my threshing crews yelling in the chaff of a strawpile and  
the running wheat of the wagonboards, my cornhuskers, my harvest  
hands hauling crops, singing dreams of women, worlds, horizons?

. . . .  
Rivers cut a path on flat lands.  
The mountains stand up.  
The salt oceans press in  
And push on the coast lines.  
The sun, the wind, bring rain  
And I know what the rainbow writes  
across the east or west in a half circle:  
A love-letter pledge to come again.

. . . .  
Towns on the Soo Line,  
Towns on the Big Muddy,  
Laugh at each other for cubs  
And tease as children. 50

Omaha and Kansas City, Minneapolis and St. Paul, sisters in a house together,  
throwing slang, growing up.  
Towns in the Ozarks, Dakota wheat towns, Wichita, Peoria, Buffalo, sisters  
throwing slang, growing up.

. . . .  
Out of the prairie-brown grass crossed with a streamer of wigwam smoke—  
out of a smoke pillar, a blue promise—out of wild ducks woven in greens  
and purples—  
Here I saw a city rise and say to the peoples round the world: Listen, I am  
strong, I know what I want.  
Out of log house and stumps—canoes stripped from tree-sides—flatboats  
coaxed with an ax from the timber claims—in the years when the red  
and the white men met—the houses and streets rose. 55

A thousand red men cried and went away to new places for corn and women:  
a million white men came and put up skyscrapers, threw out rails and  
wires, feelers to the salt sea: now the smokestacks bite the skyline with  
stub teeth.

In an early year the call of a wild duck woven in greens and purples: now the  
riveter's chatter, the police patrol, the song-whistle of the steamboat.

To a man across a thousand years I offer a handshake.  
I say to him: Brother, make the story short, for the stretch of a thousand  
years is short.

What brothers these in the dark? 60

What eaves of skyscrapers against a smoke moon?  
These chimneys shaking on the lumber shanties  
When the coal boats plow by on the river—  
The hunched shoulders of the grain elevators—  
The flame sprockets of the sheet steel mills 65  
And the men in the rolling mills with their shirts off  
Playing their flesh arms against the twisting wrists of steel:

what brothers these  
in the dark  
of a thousand years? 70

A headlight searches a snowstorm.  
A funnel of white light shoots from the pilot of the Pioneer Limited crossing  
Wisconsin.

In the morning hours, in the dawn,  
The sun puts out the stars of the sky  
And the headlight of the Limited train. 75

The fireman waves his hand to a country schoolteacher on a bobsled.  
A boy, yellow hair, red scarf and mittens, on the bobsled, in his lunchbox a  
pork chop sandwich and a V of gooseberry pie.  
The horses fathom a snow to their knees.  
Snow hats are on the rolling prairie hills.  
The Mississippi bluffs wear snow hats. 80

Keep your hogs on changing corn and mashes of grain,  
O farmerman.  
Cram their insides till they waddle on short legs  
Under the drums of bellies, hams of fat.  
Kill your hogs with a knife slit under the ear. 85

Hack them with cleavers.  
Hang them with hooks in the hind legs.

. . . . .

A wagonload of radishes on a summer morning.  
Sprinkles of dew on the crimson-purple balls. 89  
The farmer on the seat dangles the reins on the rumps of dapple-gray horses.  
The farmer's daughter with a basket of eggs dreams of a new hat to wear to  
the country fair.

. . . . .

On the left- and right-hand side of the road,  
Marching corn—  
I saw it knee high weeks ago—now it is head high—tassels of red silk creep  
at the ends of the ears.

. . . . .

I am the prairie, mother of men, waiting.  
They are mine, the threshing crews eating beefsteak, the farmboys driving  
steers to the railroad cattle pens. 95  
They are mine, the crowds of people at a Fourth of July basket picnic, listen-  
ing to a lawyer read the Declaration of Independence, watching the  
pinwheels and Roman candles at night, the young men and women two  
by two hunting the bypaths and kissing bridges.  
They are mine, the horses looking over a fence in the frost of late Octo-  
ber saying good-morning to the horses hauling wagons of rutabaga to  
market.  
They are mine, the old zigzag rail fences, the new barb wire.

. . . . .

The cornhuskers wear leather on their hands.  
There is no let-up to the wind. 100  
Blue bandannas are knotted at the ruddy chins.

Falltime and winter apples take on the smolder of the five o'clock November  
sunset: falltime, leaves, bonfires, stubble, the old things go, and the earth  
is grizzled.  
The land and the people hold memories, even among the anthills and the  
angleworms, among the toads and woodroaches—among gravestone writ-  
ings rubbed out by the rain—they keep old things that never grow old.

The frost loosens corn husks.  
The sun, the rain, the wind loosens cornhusks. 105  
The men and women are helpers.  
They are all cornhuskers together.  
I see them late in the western evening in a smoke-red dusk.

. . . . .

The phantom of a yellow rooster flaunting a scarlet comb, on top of a dung pile crying hallelujah to the streaks of daylight,  
 The phantom of an old hunting dog nosing in the underbrush for muskrats, barking at a coon in a treetop at midnight, chewing a bone, chasing his tail round a corncrib, 110  
 The phantom of an old workhorse taking the steel point of a plow across a forty-acre field in spring, hitched to a harrow in summer, hitched to a wagon among cornshocks in fall,  
 These phantoms come into the talk and wonder of people on the front porch of a farmhouse late summer nights.  
 "The shapes that are gone are here," said an old man with a cob pipe in his teeth one night in Kansas with a hot wind on the alfalfa.

. . . . .

Look at six eggs  
 In a mockingbird's nest. 115  
 Listen to six mockingbirds  
 Flinging follies of O-be-joyful  
 Over the marshes and uplands.

Look at songs  
 Hidden in eggs. 120

. . . . .

When the morning sun is on the trumpet-vine blossoms, sing at the kitchen pans: Shout All Over God's Heaven.  
 When the rain slants on the potato hills and the sun plays a silver shaft on the last shower, sing to the bush at the backyard fence: Mighty Lak a Rose.  
 When the icy sleet pounds on the storm windows and the house lifts to a great breath, sing for the outside hills: The Ole Sheep Done Know the Road, the Young Lambs Must Find the Way.

. . . . .

Spring slips back with a girl face calling always "Any new songs for me? Any new songs?"  
 O prairie girl, be lonely, singing, dreaming, waiting—your lover comes—your child comes—the years creep with toes of April rain on new-turned sod. 125  
 O prairie girl, whoever leaves you only crimson poppies to talk with, whoever puts a good-by kiss on your lips and never comes back—  
 There is a song deep as the falltime red haws, long as the layer of black loam we go to, the shine of the morning star over the corn belt, the wave line of dawn up a wheat valley.

. . . . .

O prairie mother, I am one of your boys.  
 I have loved the prairie as a man with a heart shot full of pain over love.

Here I know I will hanker after nothing so much as one more sunrise or a  
sky moon of fire doubled to a river moon of water. 130

. . . . .

I speak of new cities and new people.  
I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes.  
I tell you yesterday is a wind gone down, a sun dropped in the west.  
I tell you there is nothing in the world, only an ocean of to-morrows, a sky  
of to-morrows.

I am a brother of the cornhuskers who say at sundown:  
To-morrow is a day. 135

## TO AUTUMN

*John Keats (1819)*

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees, 5  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease, 10  
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; 15  
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day, 25  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
 Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. 30

## ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

*John Keats (1819)*

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk;  
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5  
 But being too happy in thine happiness—  
 That thou, light wingèd Dryad of the trees,  
 In some melodious plot  
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,  
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!  
 O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15  
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
 And purple-stainèd mouth;  
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim; 20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs; 25  
 Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin and dies;  
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
 And leaden-eyed despairs;  
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes  
 Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow. 30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards  
 Already with thee! tender is the night, 35

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; 45  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy!  
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown;  
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65  
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
The same that oft-times hath  
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.  
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75  
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
In the next valley-glades.  
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep? 80

## TO A SKY-LARK

*William Wordsworth (1807)*

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!  
 For thy song, Lark, is strong;  
 Up with me! up with me into the clouds!  
     Singing, singing,  
 With clouds and sky about thee ringing, 5  
     Lift me, guide me till I find  
 That spot which seems so to thy mind!  
 I have walked through wildernesses dreary,

And today my heart is weary;  
 Had I now the wings of a faëry, 10  
 Up to thee would I fly.  
 There is madness about thee, and joy divine  
 In that song of thine;  
 Lift me, guide me high and high  
 To thy banqueting place in the sky. 15

    Joyous as morning,  
 Thou art laughing and scorning;  
 Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,  
 And, though little troubled with sloth,  
 Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loath 20  
 To be such a traveler as I.  
 Happy, happy Liver,  
 With a soul as strong as a mountain river  
 Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,  
     Joy and jollity be with us both! 25

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,  
 Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;  
 But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,  
 As full of gladness and as free of heaven,  
 I, with my fate contented, will plod on, 30  
 And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

## THE MORNING SONG OF SENLIN

*Conrad Aiken (1925)*

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning  
 When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,  
 I arise, I face the sunrise,  
 And do the things my fathers learned to do.  
 Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops 5



Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,  
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet  
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine leaves tap my window,  
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones, 10  
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree  
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror  
And tie my tie once more.  
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight 15  
Crash on a white sand shore.  
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:  
How small and white my face!—  
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air  
And bathes in a flame of space. 20  
There are houses hanging above the stars  
And stars hung under a sea . . .  
And a sun far off in a shell of silence  
Dapples my walls for me . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning 25  
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?  
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,  
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.  
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror  
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair. 30  
Accept these humble offerings, cloud of silence!  
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine leaves tap my window,  
The snail-track shines on the stones,  
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree 35  
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,  
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.  
The walls are about me still as in the evening,  
I am the same, and the same name still I keep. 40  
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,  
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.  
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,  
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills 45  
Tossing their long white manes,  
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,  
Their shoulders black with rains . . .

It is morning. I stand by the mirror  
And surprise my soul once more; 50  
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,  
There are suns beneath my floor . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness  
And depart on the winds of space for I knew not where,  
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket, 55  
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.  
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,  
And a god among the stars; and I will go  
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak  
And humming a tune I know . . . 60

Vine-leaves tap at the window,  
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,  
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree  
Repeating three clear tones.

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## PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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### THE INFLUENCE OF MY FATHER ON MY SON

*Lincoln Steffens (1931)*

#### I

IF MY father could watch my son for a while, he might realize his own immortality. A glance would not suffice. My brown-eyed, brown-haired son does not look like my red-headed, blue-eyed father. Not a bit. And the immortality I speak of has not taken on the angelic form my good father expected. The child is more like his grandfather than that. My father would invite me sweetly to come and sit on a stool at his feet, and, as I let myself trustingly down, he would gently kick the seat from under me—and laugh. I should like to have had him see his little grandson plant his sled on the basement door mat and call me out to stumble over the trap—and laugh. In both cases the victim, the devilish spirit, and the laugh were the same. So I say that if my father had the time to give to the observation of my son he might realize, if not his immortality, then the partial continuity of his character, disposition, and certainly his influence upon his line, and be—not satisfied, perhaps, but convinced, surprised, and—let me guess—amused or embarrassed.

He would be amused to see Pete, a child of six, who did not know his grandfather, wave his hand in the identical gesture my father used to make to indicate that a questionable assertion of his was obvious or final and decisive. I was highly pleased myself when I first noticed it and recognized my father. I called it an inheritance direct from him till my matter-of-fact wife showed me that I had the same wave and used it in saying I didn't.

My son's mother, by the way, spoils many of our most wonderful fancies, Pete's and mine, and that's why he and I have agreed upon a sentiment which we say in unison behind her back, and sometimes in her presence. We sing: "Pete and Papa are wonderful. Mama and Anna [the maid] are ab-surd."

My father would be amused at that, anyhow. He would say, "S-s-s-h! Don't say such things," but he would recognize in it himself and his son and his wife and my mother. He and I were often in cahoots against my mother, affectionately, on the side. Mothers do not always understand a fellow.

He would have been surprised and he might have been embarrassed when I did not rebuke my son, as he would have rebuked his son, for tripping his father over that sled. This I'll call indirect inheritance. My father, the practical joker, did not care for practical jokes on himself; he did not encourage

the practice in me. I saw and I have reacted against this inconsistency with my son. I tease, too; I don't approve of it, but my father and my grandfather in me make me play tricks on my boy, so I have to let him have some fun with me. But my son inherits the benefit of at least one half of my father's fault.

My father required me to honor my father and my mother too much to put up games on them. I did on occasion. (That's how I know that my son can't help it.) I let my father mount my pony one afternoon in time to ride past the neighboring brewery just as the engineer let off steam, and my father was pitched off; and I laughed behind a tree, where, however, my father found me and—Well, I don't do to my little boy what he did to his little boy. I feel my father in me want to, but I remember him and my feelings, and I laugh. The family laugh at the family trait.

My son "honors" his mother, as I did mine. He would not plant a sled for his mother, as I would not for mine. On the other hand, if my son breaks something, he will run to tell me about it first, and then, when his mother discovers the wreck, he backs into my arms and bids her not to speak of it.

"Daddy minded that," he says.

I asked him once why it was that he respected his mother and had no fear of me

"Oh," he said, "you are a funny man. You can get mad, like Mama, but you laugh. And—and anybody that laughs can't—can't do—what Mama does."

My father would have been surprised to hear this, as I was. My father was slower but he was severer than my mother, who was quick but light and irregular in discipline. It is just so in my son's family. My mother would thump me sharply on the head with a thimble or a spoon if I became too noisy with the whistle when I was playing I was a steamboat captain. She had no sense of the dignity of command. My father seemed always to know not only what I was doing, but what I was being. He had too much respect for a steamboat captain to humiliate me before my crew. If I committed a crime, he would not break into the scene and spoil it; he would say quietly, as between him and me, "I'll see you tomorrow morning right after breakfast about this." Now I find that I preferred my father's way and I take it with his grandson, who likewise prefers it. His mother will call suddenly: "Pete! It's bedtime," when she thinks of it, and off he must go, regardless of his occupation. I look first, to see that he is busy with, say, an important building operation, and I would no more interrupt him than I would a crooked contractor. If it's late, I join my builder, we finish the job, and then he goes satisfied to bed, the day's work done.

One improvement I have learned from my childhood experience with my father; I do not threaten punishment in the morning. That was awful. Late into the night I would lie awake tossing and wondering what he was going to do to me. Usually he did nothing. A quiet, impressive "talking to" was all I got. And no doubt his idea was that the postponement of penalty—to save himself from acting in anger—would set me to thinking and be punishment

enough, but my father did not visualize the anxiety, the agony of my sleepless hours of anticipation. Hence it is that I do visualize a bad night, and so we go to bed in Pete's house with a clean slate and a happy morrow to wake up to. No hang-overs for us, and I am pretty sure Pete feels this benefit he has from my correction of my father's error. At the end of a "serious talk" the boy and I had one day, he rested a moment, then got up and said: "Well, that's all over, isn't it?" and I assured him it was. "We'll forget it now, Pete, and never mention it again."

## II

Dealing with my son makes me recall my father so clearly that I think now that I could state his policy with me and his philosophy, if he had one. Of the philosophy I am not sure. His acts and his sayings to me were all in the direction of freedom and independence. I let my boy go and do and say pretty much as he likes, as, and perhaps because, my father kept no string on me. I could roam as a child far afield; he gave me my pony to widen my range; and I am sure that I went where my parents did not know I went. My mother would ask where I had been, rarely my father, and he backed me up if I did not want to tell—at the time.

"No, don't ask him that now," he would say to my mother. "He will tell us if he goes anywhere he shouldn't." And later, sometime when the pressure was off, I would tell him that, say, I had gone down to the dangerous one of our two rivers. That was forbidden. I was afraid myself of that river; it looked cruel, snarling, grasping, but my mother's fear was excited and unreasonable. I could not tell her I had been there. My father, when I told him, would become very quiet, thoughtful, till, looking up inquiringly, he would say:

"You have been told not to go to that river?"

"Yes."

A pause. "You don't often disobey us, do you?"

"No."

"You must have wanted very much to go there if you disregarded our command that way. What was it that made you do it?"

I gave him my boy's reason, straight: a man had been drowned and I wanted to see them drag for the body.

"Did you?" he asked, interested.

"Yes, we saw them drag, but they didn't get the body." And, because he was so keen, I described all that we boys saw, and did, and said, just as I would to "another fellow." We had a long, equal talk about the day's work on the river and I had forgotten all about my disobedience when my father said:

"I should have liked to see that myself. I wish you had come by my office and taken me with you. Do that next time. Give me a chance. And say, I wouldn't again disobey directly like that any of the few rules we lay down

for you." That was all, except that at the next meal my father told my mother before me the story of my day without any reference to the disobedience part. He told it well, too; to my satisfaction, but not to my mother's. She kept saying, "But—but—"

I love my mother, but—but—my father respected me. He respected, as you see, my disobedience; he respected my bunk, my lies, my crimes. When I was a fireman, my mother made me clothes of red stuff that were suitable to a firefighter—sure; and she let me ride my pony to fires; but when one day there was an alarm during dinner and I leaped up so quick that I nearly upset the table, she remonstrated and forbade me to go to that fire. I wasn't really a fireman to her. To my father I was. He sprang up too, put out a hand to stay my mother's indignation, and he shouted: "Go it, boy! Get there—first!" I did. I got first to that fire, and when I came back I found that it had been settled in the family that I could go, fast, to any fire that occurred any time when I was on duty, any time of day except when I was in school or in bed.

This I have passed on intact to Pete, with a smile added. When the boy was in the so-called lying period (he was about five years old) he learned to tell his big stories to me rather than his mother. She was patient with them, but they were whoppers just the same. I joined in his fiction, as I did in his building or business operations. We ran a garage, I as owner, he as manager; we had a taxi and baggage service, which met all trains and responded, fast, to all private calls. It was real and pretty strenuous to all—his mother, too—but the test came when there was a train to meet at mealtimes. Then it appeared pretty plainly that Pete's mother really regarded the garage business as bunk, or at any rate it was not as serious as his dinner!

Well, we businessmen held a directors' meeting and decided and announced that, hereafter, our garage would close from one to two P.M. But we sang our little song: "Pete and Papa are wonderful. Mama and Anna are absurd."

Mama, Anna, and many of our neighbors disapproved of this song. When we sang it together at tea, women were shocked and some men wagged their funny old heads. "How can you teach your son such nonsense!" they exclaimed—and if I explained that it doesn't matter what you *teach* a child, that all that matters is what he *learns*, they did not understand me. My father and my grandfather would have understood perfectly, as their grandson and great-grandson did. Maybe the following incident will clear it all up.

One day Pete came to my study door and said that he had just killed a bear. "Where?" I asked.

"Over there," he waved.

"That's wonderful," I said. "A coincidence. I just killed ten bears." He looked a bit dashed, but he inquired:

"Where?"

"Over there," I waved.

He looked so beaten that I rose and said: "Come on, Pete, let's go and tell Mama."

"Oh, no," he protested, "not Mama."

"Ah, come on," I urged, offering to take his hand. "I'll do the talking."

Very reluctantly, he put his hand in mine and we went into the house, up to his mother, who was busy (writing fiction).

"Mama," I said, "Pete killed a bear."

Annoyed, she looked up at me and demanded why I encouraged the boy to lie like that.

"Oh, that's nothing," I said. "I just killed ten bears."

"Oh, go away!" she exclaimed, in real irritation. "You are both liars and I don't think it's funny." And she actually pushed us.

We took hands again, we bear-killers, we liars; we slunk out of the house and sat down on the front steps, he at one side, I at the other, and we were silent a long time. I was wondering what was going on in the boy's head. At last he spoke.

"Daddy."

"Yes, Pete."

"Daddy, Pete and Papa are not wonderful."

"No?"

"No. Mama is wonderful. Pete and Papa are absurd."

Well, I took that. We got up, hand in hand; we walked about a bit in the garden till we were called to luncheon. Seated at table, I wanted to break the strain, so I said: "Come on, Pete, let's say it," and, with his grandfather's twinkle of the eye, he joined me in saying: "Pete and Papa are wonderful," and so forth.

He knew. You don't have to be careful with children, unless you have taken a pose and have to remember to keep it up; and even then . . .

### III

My father made with me one serious mistake which I see parents about me making. He got himself somehow into the awkward position of an authority; I thought he knew he was right on everything—for a while. He did not pretend to righteousness or omniscience. He seemed to me as a boy to be fair, and he seems to me now, as a man, to have been either very modest or well aware of the danger there is of exposure for a father who has been idealized. Just the same, he was idealized. I suppose that he did what I see these other parents do; he probably answered impatiently and, therefore, thoughtlessly and positively the prattling questions of my early childhood, of that impressionable period of the first seven years. Anyway, when I became conscious and my father took me and my problems seriously, he was already my household god. And then—and then—

Among the many places out in the world to which I rode off alone on the pony he had given me was the State Fair grounds. Happening to turn in there of a spring morning, I saw some jockeys exercising a string of race horses. I joined them; they objected at first to the kid, but one of them—a colored boy named Smoke—said I could stay, and by and by I was accepted. The trainers found a use for me: to ride bareback their trotting horses. I decided to become a jockey. My mother discovered the secret first. I did not eat—not regularly. I would fast for a day or two, then break down and gobble. She complained, scolded, questioned. Mothers are awful. My father saved me. He bade her leave me alone and he observed me for a day or two, then he took me aside and asked me quietly. "What is all this fasting for?" He was so "nice and easy" about it that I told him about me and the jockeys and the trainers; and how they said that "if I kept my weight down I might be a winner."

My father sat reflecting a long time, his way, before he answered, and his speech showed that he accepted my career on the turf absolutely. He began by advising me about fasting. I wasn't to do it as I had been doing it: going without food, then eating too much. A better way was to eat moderately, choosing foods that I did not like and usually avoided, like vegetables, for instance, and holding to what he called my "dict." He talked about horses and horse racing, which he named the king of sports and the sport of kings. What struck me was that he knew all about the turf, as he knew all about everything. Also, he spoke to my mother, so that she entered into the game—not enthusiastically; she made faces and tended to utter protests, but my daddy "minded" them. He stopped her with that immortal wave of the hand which I see his grandson wave.

So I went on as a jockey apprentice to learn all about horses, racing, and riding, till the spring meets. We knew the horses entered for those races, which were good, which were best, and we had our favorites. Smoke had one in his stable that could beat anything in sight. Smoke loved, we all respected, I adored that horse, and when he ran, sure to win, he lost. Smoke "pulled" him. I saw it from my perch under the wire. I saw the horse fight for the bit with Smoke, who fought back. I saw it all, and I learned that horse racing wasn't on the level, that some races were "fixed" to catch the "suckers" and give the racing men and jockeys a chance to make some money. Smoke blamed the suckers—"they spoiled everything." I blamed and I hated the suckers who spoiled everything.

I quit the track, I gave up the turf as a career, I ate my fill. My father noticed it, asked me why, but I could not tell him right away. Too painful. And besides, he must know what racing was. He invited me to go with him to several races, but I refused till some big business friends came to town and joined in asking me to "Come on, boy, and see the sport." It was too humiliating to enter with them at the main gate. I went in "free" through the stable door the jockeys used, joined them on the grandstand where the despised public sat, the suckers. They were betting on the favorite in the next race and



talking wisely about his condition and past performances. It seemed to me they were pretending to know some things that they did not know. I got up, ran down to the stables and my friend Smoke and the rest. They were laughing about this race. It was fixed; the favorite was to lose, and I heard the name of the horse that was to win. Darting back to my father's party of superior grown-ups, I said, not too loud, that the favorite they were betting on would not win and I named the winner—who won. I knew, they didn't. Astonished, they asked me how I knew. I refused to tell them then. They were suckers. Of course, most of them were; but my father? He asked me afterwards how I picked the winner and I told him then—all about horse racing. He was all right; he listened, reflected, believed, and he tried to save some of my illusions.

But—the tragedy of this little comedy, repeated in other departments of life as I was seeing it, was the discovery that my father did not know everything; he was not always right.

#### IV

Now, I recovered from this, from all these experiences. I saw that he did not pretend to know all, that he felt and could admit that he was often wrong and in doubt. It was only my infant idol that suffered, my idealization of my father, and—and myself. But that was enough.

When my son appeared on the scene, when he was a baby, I remembered the disappointment and distress of my young disillusionment and I determined to save him and *his* father from any such experience. The first time my father's grandson asked me a question, I said I did not know; and the next time, and the next. I have never known the answer. Sometimes I say, "I don't know. Let's go and see." So we find out things together. If that is not possible, if we can't see with our eyes what we want to know, I may say: "I don't know, Pete, but I think it's—so." Or I say, "Grown-ups say it's so, but we don't really know." Indeed, we have a saying, the boy and I, which we repeat often in unison: "I think so, but I don't know," or "I don't know, but I think so."

The theory of this skepticism is that the child has everything to learn for himself and, for us, not only what we don't know, but also—all over again—what we think we do know. And to enforce his self-reliance I seek cases where he and I can differ. He thinks his ball went over there where I saw it go; I think it went over here. We look here first, and Daddy is wrong. We look over there, and there it is. Pete was right—often.

I think that my father, if he could observe us, might wag his head over these exercises that have gone on for six years—during the unconscious, most sensitive period of his grandson's life. I don't know what my father would have thought when his grandson said the other day:

"My daddy is always wrong. My mama is always right. And Pete? I am half right and half wrong."

I don't know, but I think that my father would have sat silent a long time,

reflecting, remembering, and then seen that his influence upon his grandson—through me—was both directly and indirectly his very own, his immortal self. And he would have been convinced if he saw what I saw: that Pete thought that on the whole, humanly and socially speaking, it was rather better to be wrong than right, or, at any rate, more amusing.

## LOVE—OR THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A VALUE

*Joseph Wood Krutch (1929)*

### I

IN ONE of these popular phrases too generally current to be attributed to any particular person, and hence seeming to have been uttered by a whole and united folk, our Victorian ancestors were accustomed to say that "love is best." Perhaps no other cultural group had ever set itself more resolutely to discipline this most unruly of passions by laying down the conditions under which one might permissibly indulge in it, and perhaps no other had expressed a more inflexible disapproval of any violation of the taboos with which it was surrounded; but, for all the strictness of its definition, it gave to "virtuous love" the highest place in its hierarchy of values.

The age was, though we sometimes forget the fact, an age of many skepticisms, during which many things were called in question, but it never doubted the worth of that which we are accustomed to call, in a phrase whose downrightness would have shocked it profoundly, "sublimated sex." It looked with loathing and fear at any of the cruder manifestations of the sexual instincts, but when those instincts had been adorned with poetry, and submitted to the discipline of society, it regarded them as the source not only of the most admirable virtues, but of the most intrinsically valuable of human experiences as well. In theory, at least, a successful love crowned all other successes and obliterated all other failures. It made all men equal because all men were capable of it, and it stood between man and any ultimate pessimism because, so long as love was possible, life could not be either meaningless or not worth the living. Nor was this evaluation questioned by the leaders in any school of thought, for upon this point even Gladstone and Huxley would have agreed. Whether man were son of God or great-grandson of the ape, it was in love that he fulfilled himself. If he were the former, then love brought him nearer than anything else to the divine state from which he had fallen; if he were the latter, then at least love carried him to the highest level of which he was capable.

Now faiths such as this lie deeper than religious or political creeds. The Christian knows that he is a Christian and that other people are not; the Democrat is aware of theories of government other than his; but such tacit evaluations as that set upon love are accepted as matters of fact, almost as

something established by the scheme of nature. These Victorians knew that they were, in the literal sense of the word, puritans here as elsewhere. They knew, that is to say, that they had insisted upon a soberness in love as well as in religion, and that they looked upon the antisocial tendencies of extravagant passion in the same way that they looked upon the antisocial tendencies of extravagant religion; but that it was in love that the meaning of life must inevitably be sought they never stopped to doubt. They did not much consider the fact that the ability to live for love in any form was a relatively recent accomplishment on the part of the human race; that the tacit assumption which lay behind all their literature and all their thinking was not, after all, part of the unchangeable nature of man, but merely an assumption, seemingly inevitable because it had been handed on and accepted by one generation after another, which had changed the rules of the game, but never doubted that it was worth the playing. And it was in part because love seemed to them so inevitably valuable that they were able to hold so firmly to their belief in its supreme importance.

We, however, have specialized in origins, and it requires no more than a glance at the past to show that the high values set upon love are not inevitable. Certainly the savage—the American Indian, for example—knows little of what we call romance. When he sings his songs or addresses his gods, when, that is to say, his consciousness reaches the intensest level of which he is capable, it is upon thoughts of agriculture and of war that he dwells. These are the activities which seem to him to be most worthy to be realized or adorned in contemplation, because they are the ones which seem to bring him closest to the meaning of life; and when he thinks of wooing he does so chiefly not because he regards love as the most significant of human emotions, but because his wife will bear him sons to help guide the destiny of the tribe or to slay its enemies. Like all human beings, the savage considers certain experiences as ends in themselves, but he still regards the act of sexual union as a relatively simple process, important chiefly because of its biological function; it is only somewhere between savagery and civilization that love is born.

At first it holds, no doubt, a relatively low place in the hierarchy of values. The stories which deal with it are at first fewer than those which deal with the struggle against the elements and warfare with neighboring tribes; the lover is still far less than the warrior the type of the hero; and soft emotions are still a matter for surprise, almost for shame. But, once these emotions have been accepted into song and story, they reveal an amazing capacity to elaborate and complicate themselves. They come to be regarded with respect and awe; a mythology quite as elaborate as that concerning the combats of warriors grows up around them; and tacitly it is assumed that a great love is a subject hardly less worthy, hardly less near the divine, than a great heroism.

Perhaps the sterner members of the society set themselves up against it and shake their heads when amorous songs or poems win more applause than warlike ones, but at least the romantic view of life has come to set itself

against what, for want of a better name, we must call the heroic one, and a value is born.

Love is, then, not a fact in nature of which we become aware, but rather a creation of the human imagination; and this is true not only when we think of the word as implying some complicated system of attitudes like that of the Victorians, but even when we think of it as referring to no more than a mere physical act to which considerable importance is attached. The very singling out of this particular desire as one more significant than others must precede any attribution of transcendental values to it, and even this singling out took place recently enough for us to be aware of it. If mere lust cannot play any very large part in human life until the imagination has created it, how much more conspicuously is it true that we must regard as purely a creation of the human mind so complex a system of emotional attitudes—interwoven with all sorts of æsthetic, sociological and mystical conceptions—as that which was implied by the Victorian in the word “love.” Behind the simple phrase “love is best” lies a history—half of social organization, half of human imagination—which volumes could not adequately trace.

Yet, artificial as is this system of values, and fundamentally illogical as are the associations which lead us to centre the chief human experiences around love, they tend strongly to perpetuate themselves, both because the young of a nation become habituated to an acceptance of them long before any critical sense is developed and because, so far as they are the result of any biologically transmutable evolution, the development of the race is recapitulated in that of the individual. As a child, the normal individual is, like the savage on all but special occasions, either almost unaware of sex or inclined to regard it as something between the ludicrous, the forbidden, and the obscene. He is ashamed of any unexpected emotion which he feels in the presence of his complement, and he is inclined to jeer at those slightly older than himself who show any tendency to abandon the—to him—rational preoccupations of childhood. But then, as he reaches adolescence, a change no less surprising to himself than to others takes place. Much that, as a child, he had heard without understanding becomes suddenly meaningful to him, and he realizes that he is capable of participating in experiences which have hitherto been known to him only by the words applied to them. All his daydreams now centre around exploits which a little before would have seemed to him silly, and if he happens to have been born into one of those highly developed societies like our own, where love is often regarded as the supreme human privilege, he will invest thoughts of that which had been, a short time before, both ridiculous and obscene, with a religious awe.

Not only will his thoughts be constantly busy with it, but he will tend to centre around it even those of his aspirations which do not seem to be actually related. He will plan to become virtuous, brave, and successful in order to please some member of the opposite sex; he will achieve wealth, power, or fame in order to lay them at her feet. Even those things which earlier—and perhaps also later—seem to him quite worth having for themselves must now

borrow their value from her. The ramifications of a simple biological act have come to fill the universe, and it, with all that it involves, has come to be not merely one of the things which make life worth while, but *the* thing which at all justifies or makes it meaningful. For him, as for his race, love has, in a word, become a value—perhaps the supreme one—something indubitably worth while in itself and something capable by its own magic of making other things valuable either as means or as adornments.

Such a youth has come into an inheritance of illusions as important and perhaps as valuable as anything else which his ancestors have transmitted to him. He accepts it as part of nature, but it is, as surely as the government under which he lives or the house which shelters him, a human creation, and one which is more fundamental than any other, because it is not something which enables him to live, but something which endows living with a meaning and a purpose. It is an illusion to which centuries of existence have been necessary before it could assume the form and the apparent solidity with which to him it seems endowed, a value which was gradually created while other values faded away.

To the savage who knew nothing of romantic love the world was not so barren without it as it would seem under similar circumstances to the average Latin or Teuton of our day. The experiences of the hunt, still lingeringly delightful to many, were to him passionately absorbing and intrinsically as worth while as love-making later came to be. In the celebration of the spring festival he had as ecstatic a sense of a mystical initiation into the meaning of the universe as the modern young romantic for the first time in the arms of his mistress. But the possibility of these experiences has passed away.

While love was gradually being created, other values vanished; for such, for all their apparent inevitability to those who feel them, is their way; and to know this is to know that even the complex of illusions called "love" is one which might also, under certain circumstances, pass away. Certain peoples, it is obvious, have never had it. Consider, for example, the mental and social organization not only of the savage, but of, let us say, the Chinese, whose entire spiritual life is fundamentally incomprehensible to us, largely because of the fact that, having always regarded sexual passion as a relatively trivial thing, they have set the highest value upon filial rather than upon marital love, and about this latter have centred not only their social structure, but the most important of their moral and emotional groupings as well, so that, for example, they would not be, like us, inclined to think of love as the chief source of virtue or the chief reward of fortitude.

Nor do we need, in order to get some faint idea how love might come to be less for us than it was for our ancestors, go so far afield as savagery or China, since we may observe in the lives of our own not too remote forefathers how certain self-justifying and intrinsically worth-while activities came to lose their magic. From certain pursuits—war, for example—they got satisfactions which, at least so far as the more advanced part of mankind is concerned, we find it difficult to understand. Of it, of chivalric honor, of

national glory, of noble birth, and of various other things, they spoke in a way which indicates that these things had for them an emotional content which is rapidly becoming as nearly extinct as that which is embodied for the savage in the spring festival, and which it is almost as hard for us to understand as it would be for a Chinese sage to understand what we mean when we speak of a "world well lost for love."

Values of this kind seem so inevitably natural to those who accept them, and pass so insensibly away, that their rise and fall are only imperfectly recorded, but the changes which take place in their status are, perhaps, the most momentous events in the life of the human race. They have a far more profound effect upon man than any mere changes of government, for they are, in effect, changes of God, and they involve a change both in his whole conception of the meaning of the universe and in the thing for which he lives. Every time a value is born, existence takes on a new meaning; every time one dies, some part of that meaning passes away.

## II

Most of the faiths which we received from the Victorians had already by then been shaken. Certainly the Church which they left us was already weakened and despoiled, and the majority of their dogmas had become gradually so much attenuated that it needed only the resolute "Pooh!" uttered by the new generation to make them vanish away. Yet their religion of love, or at least the value which they attached to that passion, reached us almost intact. With no subject has the contemporary mind been more persistently busy, but it did not, in the beginning, think of questioning the fundamental premise.

If one reads the novels of H. G. Wells—which will stand as perhaps the best expression of the minds of the "liberal" mass—one will see that, for all their social iconoclasm, they imply a tacit acceptance of the assumption that "love is best" quite as complete as that of any Victorian novel; and if one reads the six volumes of Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*—which will stand perhaps as the completest and most characteristic of those works which made a rationalist attitude toward sex an important feature of the spirit of the age—one will see that to Ellis, too, love has its element of transcendental value. Neither the scientist nor the romancer dreamed of questioning the fact that love was the most significant of human experiences and that in it men might find the ultimate justification of life. If both were frequently concerned with an attack upon what were beginning to be called, even in popular language, the "taboos" which surround the theory and the practice of love, both were so concerned because they thought of love as too obviously the supreme privilege of man to be burdened with irrational proscriptions; and their ultimate purpose was, in a word, not to cheapen or tarnish, but merely to free it.

The Victorians, for all their romantic system of values, had accepted the

frustrations and the sacrifices entailed by their social code with a complacency which seemed to the new generation hardly less than heartless. They had seemed to take even a sort of perverse satisfaction in contemplating the bowed head with which people were supposed to acknowledge the inviolability of the rules and which Matthew Arnold had celebrated in two of his most characteristic stanzas:

Each in his own strict line we move,  
And some find death ere they find love;  
So far apart their lives are thrown  
From the twin soul that halves their own.

And sometimes, by still harder fate,  
The lovers meet, but meet too late  
—Thy heart is mine; *True, true. Ah, true,*  
—Then, love, thy hand; *Ah, no! Adieu!*

They had, moreover, visited their punishments mercilessly, and they had even—witness George Eliot in *Adam Bede*—persuaded themselves that the punishments visited by society upon those who violated its taboos were the result of a law of nature, and the new generation was merely anxious to avoid the commoner tragedies of love which it regarded as avoidable. It looked forward to an individual who, free from a corroding sense of sin, should live in a society which placed no unnecessary restrictions upon emotional fulfillment, and, far from anticipating any cynical devaluation of love itself, it hoped only for an age in which men should love more freely, more fully, and more perfectly.

Yet it requires no more than a casual acquaintance with either contemporary life or its reflection in contemporary literature to enable one to perceive that this life hardly corresponds to the anticipation.

Freedom has come, but with it a certain lessened sense of the importance of the passions that are thus freely indulged; and, if love has come to be less often a sin, it has come also to be less often a supreme privilege. If one turns to the smarter of those novelists who describe the doings of the more advanced set of those who are experimenting with life—to, for example, Mr. Aldous Huxley or Mr. Ernest Hemingway—one will discover in their tragic farces the picture of a society which is at bottom in despair because, though it is more completely absorbed in the pursuit of love than in anything else, it has lost the sense of any ultimate importance inherent in the experience which preoccupies it; and if one turns to the graver of the intellectual writers—to, for example, Mr. D. H. Lawrence, Mr. T. S. Eliot, or Mr. James Joyce—one will find both explicitly and implicitly a similar sense that the transcendental value of love has become somehow attenuated, and that, to take a perfectly concrete example, a conclusion which does no more than bring a man and woman into complete possession of one another is a mere bathos which does nothing except legitimately provoke the comment, "Well, what

of it?" One can hardly imagine them concerned with what used to be called, in a phrase which they have helped to make faintly ridiculous, "the right to love." Individual freedom they have inherited and assumed as a right, but they are concerned with something which their more restricted forefathers assumed—with, that is to say, the value of love itself. No inhibitions either within or without restrain them, but they are asking themselves, "What is it worth?" and they are certainly no longer feeling that it is obviously and in itself something which makes life worth the living.

To Huxley and Hemingway—I take them as the most conspicuous exemplars of a whole school—love is at times only a sort of obscene joke. The former in particular has delighted to mock sentiment with physiology, to place the emotions of the lover in comic juxtaposition with quaint biological lore, and to picture a romantic pair "quietly sweating palm to palm." But the joke is one which turns quickly bitter upon the tongue, for a great and gratifying illusion has passed away, leaving the need for it still there. His characters still feel the physiological urge, and, since they have no sense of sin in connection with it, they yield easily and continually to that urge; but they have also the human need to respect their chief preoccupation, and it is the capacity to do this that they have lost. Absorbed in the pursuit of sexual satisfaction, they never find love and they are scarcely aware that they are seeking it, but they are far from content with themselves. In a generally devaluated world they are eagerly endeavoring to get what they can in the pursuit of satisfactions which are sufficiently instinctive to retain inevitably a modicum of animal pleasure, but they cannot transmute that simple animal pleasure into anything else. They themselves not infrequently share the contempt with which their creator regards them, and nothing could be less seductive, because nothing could be less glamorous, than the description of the debaucheries born of nothing except a sense of the emptiness of life.

Now it is gratifyingly appropriate that this Huxley should be the grandson of the great Victorian exponent of life rationally conducted in the light of natural knowledge, since the predicament which he recognizes is a direct result of the application of the principles advocated by the grandfather. It is true, of course, that Thomas Henry Huxley felt too strongly the influence of Victorian taboos ever to indulge in any extended naturalistic consideration of the problems of sex, but the Ellises and the Wellses, whom we have taken as the type of those who have concerned themselves with such an effort, did little more than apply the principles which he laid down. They used analysis in an effort to clarify an illusion, and the result, which now seems as though it might have been foretold, was to destroy that illusion.

They were, to be sure, successful in the immediate objects which they proposed to themselves; they did, that is to say, succeed in freeing love, both by relaxing somewhat the ferocity with which society had punished conduct which deviated from even the mere letter of its code and by lifting from mankind the burden of that sense of guilt which had oppressed so many and



not infrequently poisoned what would have been otherwise a mighty and perfect experience. But when the consequences of love were made less momentous, then love itself became less momentous too, and we have discovered that the now-lifted veil of mystery was that which made it potentially important as well as potentially terrible. Sex, we learned, was not so awesome as once we had thought; God does not care so much about it as we had formerly been led to suppose; but neither, as a result, do we. Love is becoming gradually so accessible, so unmysterious, and so free that its value is trivial.

That which the Victorians regarded as possessed of a supreme and mystical value was, as we have already pointed out, a group of related ideas and emotional aptitudes whose elements had, during a long period of time, been associated by means of connections not always logical. Analysis can dissociate them and has indeed done so, but in so doing it destroys the importance which only as a group they possessed. We know that the social consequences which once followed a surrender to love need no longer do so, and hence the nexus between the sexual act and those elements of the love complex which are predominantly social has disappeared. More important yet, we know, or rather we feel, that this act is a simple biological one which sends no reverberations through a spiritual universe, and so it no longer has any transcendental implications. With vertiginous rapidity it is being reduced to that which it was in savage or prehuman society, and threatens to become again no more than a simple physiological act with no more than a simple physiological act's importance or value.

For many generations the adolescence of the individual has repeated the miracle achieved in the first place by the human race as a whole; it has, that is to say, associated the new impulses suddenly discovered in itself with various duties to society and with all the other aspirations of which it is capable; but this miracle is one which is becoming constantly more difficult of performance. Certain individuals have always and for different reasons failed to achieve it, and they have been compelled in consequence to lead jangled lives; but more and more people find themselves victims of a disharmony which results from the fact that they cannot escape a continual preoccupation with a passion which seems to their intellect trivial, and it would not be wholly fanciful to say that this sense of disharmony, of the unworthiness of their aims, is the modern equivalent of the conviction of sin.

It is not to be supposed, I take it, that any mood so disrupted as this is destined to endure. It represents an unstable equilibrium of forces in which one or the other is bound sooner or later to yield; for if the passion of love is to be devaluated, then it must be made to play in human life a part as small as our slight estimate of its importance makes appropriate. Such was the position to which the early Church Fathers attempted to reduce it, and they were unsuccessful because the conflict which they felt between their instincts and their intellectual convictions was resolved in the religion of love; but the modern consciousness is surely destined either to evolve some equally mighty

fiction or, while surrendering the erotic instinct as a source of important values, to dispose of it in some fashion involving a minimum of inconvenience and distraction. Nor is the fact that the ferocious and deliberate nastiness of some current writers suggests that of the Fathers, that, for example, Huxley has even in the midst of one of his novels quoted in the Latin from which he hardly dared translate it one of the most brutally scornful of their comments upon the flesh, merely an accident, since there is a certain similarity between the early saint and the contemporary sophisticate which is due to the fact that, however different their experiences may be, each rejects love for the same reason—each, that is to say, has refused to surround it with mystical implications, and each, looking at it as a mere biological fact, has found it ridiculous and disgusting. Certainly the nastiness of, let us say, James Joyce's *Ulysses* is the nastiness of an ascetic reviling the flesh in order that he may be free of it.

Now, if we set aside the ascetic ideal which in the past, at least, has generally proved itself radically impracticable, and if we set aside also the romantic ideal which the rationalizing tendencies of the human mind seem certain to destroy, there is only one way in which the artist—by which term is here meant whoever is distinctly human enough to have a plan for his life which he sets up in opposition to the simple plan of nature—may deal with sex, and that way is the one in which it is accepted as something ineluctable, perhaps, but nevertheless uncomplex and trivial. The man who follows it may feel no need to battle against the flesh; he may have no desire to waste his energies in a futile struggle against the inclinations of the natural man, and he may preach no stern denials; but he makes of love a game, a joke, a ribaldry even, in order that, since it no longer seems really significant, it may be reduced to a mere incident.

And if, leaving the Huxleys and the Hemingways, who are concerned with characters still in the midst of confusion, we turn to certain other novelists, poets, and critics, we shall find them at least adumbrating such a solution, as may be illustrated by the words put into the mouth of a by no means ascetic painter in one of the most powerful of contemporary novels. "The tendency of my work," he remarks, "is, as you may have noticed, that of an invariable severity. Apart from its being good or bad, its character is ascetic rather than sensuous, and divorced from immediate life. There is no slop of sex in *that*."

Such a character is merely the novelist's projection of a type which logically results from the effort to think one's way through the confusions just outlined. This painter—Tarr is his name—represents the direction in which we are moving, and he explains the growing popularity of abstract design in the plastic arts and of pure intellectualism in literature, since both represent a reaction from that diffusion of sublimated sex through all the arts which is one of the chief characteristics of romanticism. But however logical and inevitable such a tendency may be, and however preferable it is to an absorp-

tion in things which can no longer be respected, it must be remembered that it is, nevertheless, based upon a complete surrender of something which we have been accustomed to regard as one of the chief values in human life, and that it leaves a mighty blank in existence.

Whatever else love may still be—game, puerility, or wry joke played by the senses and the imagination upon the intellect—it no longer is the ultimate self-justifying value which once it was. We may still on occasion surrender to it, but surrender is no longer a paradoxical victory and the world is no longer well lost for love. Many other things we have come to doubt—patriotism, self-sacrifice, respectability, honor—but in the general wreck the wreck of love is conspicuous and typical. Rationalism having destroyed the taboos which surrounded it, and physiology having rudely investigated its phenomena upon the same level as other biological processes, it has been stripped of the mystical penumbra in whose shadow its transcendental value seemed real, though hid; and somehow, in the course of the very process of winning the right to love, love itself has been deprived of its value.

Such, in outline, is the process by which is accomplished what has here been called the death of a value. Many of us, not yet old, were born at a time when the religion of love was all but unquestioned, when it seemed to stand more firmly than even the religion of the Church, whose foundations science was already known to have slowly undermined. But if we have followed the course of modern thought we have seen it rapidly disintegrate. We have seen how works, of which Havelock Ellis's *magnum opus* is a type, claimed love as a legitimate subject for rationalistic consideration, and how, though Ellis himself believed that the superstructure of poetry would remain after its foundations had been subject to rational examination, just as Thomas Huxley believed that the superstructure of Christian morality would stand after the supernatural props had been removed from under it, the mystical values lingered as ghosts for only one generation after rationalism had attacked the mythology upon which they rested.

We have seen the rise of an atheism quite as significant in the history of the human soul as that which has regard to religion in the more conventional sense, and one whose result may be summed up by a consideration of the fact that, though the phrase "love is best" meant to our grandfathers more things than a volume could describe, it is to us so completely denuded that we can only repeat it as we repeat one of those formulæ of theology which, though once rich with meaning, are to us only words, words, words.

### III

Others who have described, though perhaps in somewhat different terms, the disintegration of the love complex have been concerned chiefly with its effect upon human society. They have stressed their fear that, for example, the progressive tendency to dissociate love from family life would involve

the most thoroughgoing reconstruction of our social organization, even if it did not destroy the possibility of any stable society, and in general they have thought of modified sexual customs in terms of their effect upon the race. We, however, are here concerned with the individual and with the consequences which the process we have been describing may have for the intimate emotional life of the separate soul—with, in a word, the changes involved by the death of love in the character of what we may call the experience of living.

We will, if we must, give up the illusion of love. The time may come when it will mean to us even less than it now means to the philosophical Chinese and no more than it did to the savage; when, to state the case somewhat differently, romance will be, either as a motive in art or an aim in living, as fundamentally incomprehensible to us as it is to the American Indian, and when it will be so, not because we have not yet developed the complex system of associations upon which it depends, but because the analytical tendencies of our intelligence forbid our imagination to create the values once deemed so precious.

We may realize now that the effort to develop the possibilities of love as an adornment of life by understanding it more completely wrecks itself upon the fact that to understand any of the illusions upon which the values of life depend inevitably destroys them; but we realize that fact too late, and even if we should convince ourselves that we have paid too high a price for our rationality, that we should willingly reassume all the taboos of the Victorian if we could feel again his buoyant sense that the meaning of life had been revealed to him through love, we could no more recapture his illusions by means of an intellectual conviction than we could return to the passionate faith of the Middle Ages merely because, having read Ruskin, we should like to build a cathedral.

Nor is human life so rich in values as to justify us in surrendering any one of them complacently. At bottom, life is worth living only because certain of our conscious activities allowed themselves to be regarded as though they were possessed of some importance or significance in themselves, and even the number of such conscious activities is too strictly limited to permit us to accept without foreboding the reduction of so important a one as that of sexual union to the status of a mere triviality. Many of the life processes—and by no means the least important—are carried on without the accompaniment of any awareness whatsoever. The beating of the heart and the slow churning of the stomach, to say nothing of the infinitely complicated activities with which the glands are busy, are as little a part of that consciousness which we know of as ourselves as is the shifting of the earth upon its axis or the explosive disintegration of an atom of radium. In one sense man cannot either "know himself" or "live completely," for the simple reason that only a fragment of his total organism is connected with that part of the brain wherein resides all that he is accustomed to call his ego or self. The body keeps itself

alive by processes which we neither will nor recognize, and death may be preparing itself for months before a warning finally bursts its way into that relatively small mass of cells to which our awareness and hence our emotions confine themselves. When the life of any individual rises above the dim level of the mere toiler whose existence is scarcely more than a round of duties, and reaches that distinctly human level upon which contemplation in some form or other furnishes the motive for living, it does so because he has attributed a meaningfulness to some aspect of consciousness, but the possibilities for such attribution are limited.

Eating, because it is a conscious and not an unconscious process, because the taste buds of the tongue happen to be connected by nerves with the cerebrum and not the cerebellum, can be made into one of the ceremonies by which life is elaborated and can pass as a symbol into poetry and philosophy. So, for the same reason, can the act of sexual union; but both digestion and gestation, because they are controlled without the intervention of consciousness, are destined to remain merely unadorned processes of nature. Man has wanted to live in order to love or even in order to eat, but hardly in order either to gestate or to digest. Yet it is merely an accident of our nervous organization that this is so.

Thus it is that of the infinitely complicated processes of life, in the biological sense, only a few are subject to that elaboration and poetization which make them even potentially a part of significant human experience. Just as the ears can hear only a certain limited class of the innumerable kinds of waves which roll incessantly through the air, and the eyes can see only a certain few of those vibrations in the ether which, after ranging from red to violet, pass on into invisibility, so, too, only a few of the processes of life furnish materials available to the mind. From a limited number of colors we must paint our pictures, from a limited number of sounds compose our symphonies, and from a limited number of conscious processes construct our "good life." But we are no more aware through our minds of the totality of what living involves than we are through our sense of the entire natural world. To ultraviolet light we are as blind as a man without eyes, and, similarly, most of our biological existence is as meaningless to us as the life of an insect is to it. Whatever does not happen within a few square inches upon the surface of our forebrain does not, so far as we are concerned, happen at all. It cannot be made the source of any human value, because it is a part of us which lives as the plant lives, without any knowledge of itself.

Nature, then, has imposed a certain rigid selection upon us. Grudgingly, perhaps, she has permitted us to be aware of certain of her activities, and has bid us do what we may by way of contemplating or elaborating them until they seem to become not, as to her all things are, merely the means by which life is kept going, but ends to be enjoyed or valued in themselves. Within the limits which she has set we have, moreover, made certain choices of our own. Certain of the available conscious processes have seemed to us more suitable

than others for this contemplation or elaboration, and we have devoted ourselves to them, leaving the others merely upon the fringe of awareness. Thus we made mere animal combativeness into chivalry, surrounded lair-making with all the association which belongs to the idea of home, and created a sense of the presence of God out of the fears for our security; but the greatest and most elaborate of our creations was love, and the process by which it is stripped of its meaning is a process by which man is dehumanized and life is made to sink back to a level nearer that of the animal, for whom life is a phenomenon in which there is no meaning except the biological urge.

At the very least it means that a color has faded from our palette, a whole range of effects dropped out of our symphony. Intellectually we may find romantic people and romantic literature only ridiculous, intellectually we may convince ourselves that we regret the passing of love no more than the passing of the spring festival or even the disappearance of those passionate convictions which made civil war seem to the Middle Ages intrinsically worth while; but we cannot deny that life is made paler and that we are carried one step nearer to that state in which existence is seen as a vast emptiness which the imagination can no longer people with fascinating illusions.

For the more skeptical of the Victorians, love performed some of the functions of the God whom they had lost. Faced with it, many of even the most hard-headed turned, for the moment, mystical. They found themselves in the presence of something which awoke in them that sense of reverence which nothing else claimed, and something to which they felt, even in the very depths of their being, that an unquestioning loyalty was due. For them love, like God, demanded all sacrifices; but like Him, also, it rewarded the believer by investing all the phenomena of life with a meaning not yet analyzed away. We have grown used—more than they—to a Godless universe, but we are not yet accustomed to one which is loveless as well, and only when we have so become shall we realize what atheism really means.

## THE RETURN TO LOVE

*Rollo Walter Brown (1945)*

### I

LONG ago I read a sentence of Maeterlinck's which began to have meaning for me by the time I was fifty: "Whence comes the timidity of the divine in man?" For by the time I had arrived at fifty I had come to have not only a general interest in the diversity of ways in which man has in fact shied away from the best in himself, but a specific belief that the most tragic of all these "timidities" has been in his perversion or denial of love. Love was only desire—that was the great "realistic" illusion in which anyone who wished could

lose himself. If anybody dared to profess faith or even belief in "romantic" love, he was only an underdeveloped or inexperienced being.

Along with the growing disrepute of "romantic" love, other matters were having more and more attention. There was a sharp decline in the permanence of marriage; there was a frightening increase in juvenile delinquency; there was a disintegration of ideals in the Church; there was an exaltation of any kind of human effort that could show obvious material results; there was an era of gangsterism that required the best that the Federal representatives of order could give; there was a rise of hatred.

This confusion of life has a closer relationship to the fortune of "romantic" love than the proponents of the "realistic" life—that is, the literal life—have ever ventured to call to anybody's attention. When people have thrown away their belief in a fertile margin of mystery in existence—ever-extending mystery—and profess to see only cold, dead boundaries instead of glowing edges of promise, they are certain to experience outbreaks of disharmony and despair.

In this too literal life, everybody has missed something—the proponents of literalness more than anyone else. Only cast an eye over the world and see. But nobody has seemed ready to go into detail about what it is that is missing, or how it might be reclaimed. There have been all sorts of counterfeiters and side-steppers. Count Keyserling visited this country to talk on such subjects as the philosophy of love, but by the time he had dictated the kind of champagne he must have—even in the days of Prohibition—had specified the kind of beautiful young women he must have entertain him from five o'clock in the afternoon until the hour of the lecture and afterward, and had exacted large fees for a brief appearance, he left many in his crowded audiences of women wondering whether he advocated some new-style promiscuity of the sexes—or just what?

Certain ministers of the Gospel spoke about the relation of the sexes in the new social order without making clear what relation or what new order. Or they spoke remotely, historically. Love seemed to be only the physical relation of persons of different sex. Or, if not that, then it was some cool theological or metaphysical state, scarcely attainable, and perhaps almost undesirable.

Now just where would a boy and girl of honest youthful aspiration, high devotion to each other, and a fresh and reasonable concern for other mortals like themselves, find in all this jumble the specific assurances on which they would live? The only patent fact to be heard every day was that the divorce courts were more and more crowded—in an age known for its roughshod heartlessness.

It ought to be time, then, for somebody to speak in behalf of love. It ought to be time to declare that since love is a going-out, a giving, and since the human life that is worth mentioning—the only one happily remembered—is the outward-bound life, we must have both if we are to have either in

completeness. And inasmuch as the love between man and woman—when it is love, in truth—is love's basic expression, there ought to be good reason for making it a beginning.

The inclination of the young to magnify qualities in those they love, to feel chivalrously, generously toward their civilized fellows, ought to be kept in unbroken continuity. But the clumsy, disordered world that we have permitted to accumulate around us makes any continuity of emotional experience next to impossible. The young who wish to marry early—early in their twenties, let us say—ought to have full opportunity. But the young man of this age—already as old as many men have been when they have made great contributions to the world—falls inescapably into the hands of the manipulators.

He must proceed in college and medical school and hospital, for instance, in such an unvarying march that he is thirty or thirty-two years old before he can feel at all established and ready to assume the responsibility of a household. Or after college and professional education, the corporation that is sending him to Central Africa or China or South America has it clearly understood that he had better not try to take a wife along. Or in some other fashion his life is manipulated to the destruction of any natural continuity of emotional experience.

Somebody makes it seem inevitable that young men and women, at the very time when they most need this continuity of emotional experience, must float around for years miscellaneously, promiscuously perhaps, before contemplating marriage. In the name of some educational or economic abstraction, we are led to blink the loss of one of the greatest potential strengths in human society: the deep poetry of life for two people who find delight in making each other psychically at ease, and who have a great constantly multiplying body of beliefs and interests in which they can live stimulatingly together.

No one could reside in such a center as Cambridge, Massachusetts, in wartime and see the little families consisting of young naval officer, wife, and a babe or two, snatching any few available minutes to walk together outside the Harvard gates, to sit together more or less in a heap on a bench in the Common, to walk by the Charles River to enjoy the turf under their feet and clear skies overhead, without having a great new reverence for the sanctity of love. These are representative of the countless young men and women who are ready to take all sorts of chances with any halfway decent fate in order to live in a monogamous state where sex and parenthood and permanence of abode are fused by love into a great single reality. The life they dream of living is a very profound life, and altogether invaluable to civilized peoples.

And always, too, it must be remembered that love can increase. Not that it always does. Most men and women that I have known who have turned sixty have either burned out the candle by burning both ends, or yielded up



to a complete fatty degeneration of spirit. "As the years come, love goes," they say. But nothing could be farther from the truth. They only reveal one more of the tragedies of confusing love and desire.

Love stays—when once it is there. Not only that. Its great profundities come late. The emotional life is cumulative. The simplest incident as it has come along through the years has attached to itself all sorts of enriching associations. There is a kind of cross-fertilization of experiences, too. Thus it comes to pass that a song familiar to a grayhead from the days of his youth does carry for him a meaning that it cannot possibly have for his grandchildren, try as they may to appreciate it. Thus it comes that love in late years is a multiplied experience, an enriched experience that causes the most precious young love to seem undernourished and undeveloped.

## II

But love cannot by anybody's narrow definition be restricted to the love between man and woman. Never has enough been said in praise of those who have found their completest love—the going-out to something that one wishes to be in harmony with, the eagerness to give oneself utterly, the readiness to sacrifice oneself, and the resulting warmth of life—in devotion to merciful serving or to an artistic ideal. They have found their own approach to happiness.

Nuns, I am sure, keep their renunciant vows. I have by chance been brought into the presence of a few thousand of them—in the hospital, in institutions of learning, on the street, in audiences, in houses where sorrow has come. Yet I have never looked into the face of one who seemed to be unhappy. If there are human beings who cannot know love unless their devotion is centered in a person of the opposite sex—and there are many such persons—there are also those who can live their devotion in solitude.

But there must be no confusion of loyalties. Nor may there be any assumption that loyalty is of little concern. I have known, for instance, a number of people who have tried a substitute for what they called "restrictive marriage"—a substitute that was a kind of unanchored arrangement which permitted all privileges and required no obligations. But even the most promising instances brought in the end a greater disillusionment than the most commonplace marriage imaginable. It must be an unconfused devotion. Neither the nuns nor the young wives and husbands meeting outside the Harvard Yard got their radiant faces by messing around.

There are workers in the arts, too, who are so given to a great distant ideal, who go out to the life they find in their work with such warmth, and who have such a sure feeling of the "divine" in themselves that they have much the same profound experience of love that those have who find love in a religious perfection. "Every good thing I have been able to do," said a brilliant poet, "I have done out of love."

In essence love is life's going out harmoniously to life. So if one believes that the creative spirit—as we use the expression when we are thinking of the arts—has come straight through to us from the source of all life, the soul of the universe, it is logical, even inevitable, that some sensitive natures, placed in given circumstances, find in the living ideal of creative work the "object" to which their deepest love can turn. Nor can the deftly analytic, who have in most instances become incapable of knowing the creative spirit by experiencing it, explain away all such great love as only some kind of frustration—unless everyone is to be called frustrated who practices a self-denial in order to enjoy a cherished perfection.

There are great lovers, too, whose lives go out inclusively. So deeply is the sweeping sense of our common destiny ingrained in their lives—"the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate," which Joseph Conrad found binding men to each other—and so ardent are they in their belief in the potential good in men that they have in all honesty a love for humankind.

A man of unquestioned austerity confessed to me one day that as he had sat in a streetcar opposite a ten-year-old Negro boy who seemed to fear that somebody was about to pounce upon him, he was moved by an irresistible impulse to go over and put his arm round the boy's shoulders and assure him that they were very much alike, after all, and had every reason for feeling at home in each other's presence. Soldiers who have felt the imminent death together have grown to love each other as brothers. Men do have these elemental experiences. And men do go wild with joy when someone like Dostoyevsky is moved to stand up and declare that a sense of brotherhood, of understanding love, will some day encompass the earth.

Whenever we are able to free ourselves from the pseudo-sophisticate mind that results from arrested growth we know the truth: Love transfigures men and women. My memory is full of instances. I have seen a young husband and wife filled with the greatest happiness they had ever known when they discovered that they—they themselves—could unite in forestalling the devastating clashes of will that had disrupted their married life. For them, it was love's greatest triumph when love made them do love's bidding.

A woman who declared in her late forties that she had everything the world could give except happiness was led by a chance sight of suffering, and an ardent resolve to get rid of some of it, into such a state of joyous concern that her only regret was that every day was sure to be too short. I have seen coal miners and woodsmen and all sorts of supposedly commonplace men filled with the capacity of poets to "see the invisible" when in any of a hundred chance ways their lives were touched by love.

And some of the increase of life is enjoyed by those who only come within the presence of those who love. This I know. When I have walked solitary and perhaps travel-weary along the quiet paths of some college campus and have met two students whose love for each other was expressed in mutual

respect, intelligent concern, and a sense of the importance of life, I have felt a great assurance for the rest of the day.

And when a sturdy Italian shoemaker volunteered to come to his shop on Sunday to repair my wartime shoes and justified such unusual procedure by saying in a kind of unending sentence, "My three big boys are all right—never got a scratch—and my girl, she's got a good job with the Army Intelligence Service down at Washington—but my little boy, I have lost him—he was in Germany just a month—and I can't stay home all day Sunday and think—so I come down here and try to do a good job at something"—when I had heard that, I experienced a great clarity of sight for an indefinite time.

### III

But is there anything to be done about it all? Is it possible to lift the percentage of favorable instances high enough to cause any change worth mentioning? Well, I think yes. If we can but remember, as Alfred de Vigny once said, that a great life is a thought in youth wrought out in ripening years, then there is something to be done. We can give attention to the "thought in youth." The young are always the great potential believers in the power of love.

When I had once been left in an Iowa college town for a free day after I had lectured there for a week, the professor of sociology invited me to visit one of his classes. "I believe it will interest you. We are devoting a term to the consideration of marriage."

I was skeptical. I wondered just how much thirty or forty boys and girls would say, would learn, about marriage in the open of a college course. But the professor was not professorial in his methods. He had been very, very patient. He was considerate of every sensitivity. He was full of the sound implication that most people do not get half so much out of life as is really there. In consequence, he had gained the confidence of his students—and their admiration.

Early in the hour somebody wished to ask the visitor a question: How long had I been married? When I replied, "Thirty-eight years—married early, you see," a bright girl said, "Well, we want to know how you've kept married that long." And before I knew it, I was trying to do something that I had never done in my life: I was standing up at the professor's desk trying to tell them. They smoked me out; they demanded definite statements.

When I said in reply to the bright girl that perhaps one reason why we had "kept married" had been that we kept ourselves for each other, another girl asked: "But couldn't that be boresome?" I tried to explain that it could, conceivably, but that love is an awakening, and when two people who really love each other live together, each life expands in its own way so that there is in each of them every day a new interest for the other. I sketched my wife busy with Mozart or Brahms while I sit off by myself two rooms away. What

she plays is stimulating to me, and my presence back there where I am busy with something of my own seems to mean something to her.

"But how do you manage your women friends?" another girl wished to know. "You don't want to spend all your time with your wife, do you?" And I explained how a central unshakable love is just what is required to provide one with the true freedom to enjoy the friendship of persons of the other sex. There is something parallel, too, where the love is not between man and woman: a deep central love enables one to go out and be in unconfused relation to all things else.

They kept after me in this fashion. But as always when I deal with the young, I felt sure that I was the one who gained most. They made me know how great is youth's hungering for a satisfying, growing love—and how shamefully their elders underestimate the readiness of the young to consider love seriously as a power in life, to apply belief in love to a world of hate.

We can take our choice. If we do not believe that the awakening, the generosity, the loyalty, the warmth expressed in love can transform the world into something more livable than what we now have, then we can take the alternative and believe that husbands and wives who cannot endure each other, neighbors who cannot endure each other, races who cannot endure each other, people who scoff at anybody who would make an improvement can somehow, added together, constitute one world living in amity. We can wait among our raucous hatreds until somebody somewhere decides to enforce his special hatred with some super-super atomic bomb. That is something definite and "realistic." But might we not have a more interesting world if we tried love?

## AMERICA'S MEDIEVAL WOMEN

*Pearl S. Buck (1928)*

I AM AN American woman but I had no opportunity until a few years ago to know women in America. Living as I did in China, it is true that I saw a few American women; but that is not the same thing. One was still not able to draw many conclusions from them about American women. I gathered, however, that they felt that girls in China had a hard time of it, because there every family liked sons better than daughters, and, in the average family, did not give them the same education or treatment. In America, however, they said people welcomed sons and daughters equally and treated them the same. This, after years in a country which defines a woman's limitations very clearly, seemed nothing short of heaven—if true.

When I came to America to live, therefore, I was interested particularly in her women. And during these immediate past years I have come to know a good many of them—women in business, artists, housewives in city and country, women young and old. I have taken pains to know them. More than

that, I have made my own place as a woman in America. And I find that what I anticipated before I came here is quite wrong. It seems to me that women are very badly treated in America. A few of them know it, more of them dimly suspect it, and most of them, though they know they ought to be glad they live in a Christian country where women are given an education, do not feel as happy in their lonely hearts as they wish they did. The reason for this unhappiness is a secret sense of failure, and this sense of failure comes from a feeling of inferiority, and the feeling of inferiority comes from a realization that actually women are not much respected in America.

I know quite well that any American man hearing this will laugh his usual tolerant laughter, though tolerant laughter is the cruelest form of contempt. He always laughs tolerantly when the subject of women is broached, for that is the attitude in which he has been bred. And immaturely, he judges the whole world of women by the only woman he knows at all—his wife. Nor does he want the sort of wife at whom he cannot laugh tolerantly. I was once amazed to see a certain American man, intelligent, learned, and cultivated, prepare to marry for his second wife a woman as silly and unfit for him as the first one had been, whom he had just divorced. I had to exclaim before it was too late, "Why do you do the same thing over again? She's merely younger and prettier than the other one—that's all. And even those differences are only temporary." To which he growled, "I do not want a damned intelligent woman in the house when I come home at night. I want my mind to rest."

What he did not see, of course—though he found it out later—was that there could be no rest for him of any kind. He was irritated by a thousand stupidities and follies and beaten in the end by his own cowardice. He died a score of years too soon, exhausted not by work but by nervous worry. His two wives go hardily on, headed for a hundred, since he left them what is called "well provided for." Neither of them has ever done an honest day's work in her life, and he literally sacrificed his valuable life to keep them alive.

And yet, going home that day from his funeral and wondering how it could have been helped, I knew it could not have been helped. He was doomed to the unhappiness, or at least to the mediocre happiness, with which many if not most American men must be satisfied in their relationships with their women. For if he had been married to an intelligent superior woman he would have been yet more unhappy, since, with all his brilliance as a scientist, he belonged to that vast majority of American men who still repeat today the cry of traditional male pride, "I don't want *my* wife to work."

That is, he wanted a woman who would contain herself docilely within four walls. And he could not have seen that an intelligent, energetic, educated woman cannot be kept in four walls—even satin-lined, diamond-studded walls—without discovering sooner or later that they are still a prison cell. No home offers scope enough to-day for the trained energies of an intelligent modern woman. Even children are not enough. She may want them, need

them and have them, love them and enjoy them, but they are not enough for her, even during the short time they preoccupy her. Nor is her husband, however dear and congenial, enough for her. He may supply all her needs for human companionship, but there is still more to life than that. There is the individual life. She must feel herself growing and becoming more and more complete as an individual, as well as a wife and mother, before she can even be a good wife and mother. I heard a smug little gray-haired woman say last week, "No, I don't know anything about politics. It takes all my time to be a good wife and mother. I haven't time to keep up with other things." Unfortunately her husband, successful doctor that he is, has time to keep up not only with his business and with being what she calls a "wonderful husband and father," but with another woman as well. But that too is one of the things she knows nothing about. . . . Yet who can blame him? He is clever and full of interest in many things, and his wife is dulled with years of living in the four walls he put round her. It is a little unfair that he so encouraged her to stay in the walls that she came to believe in them completely as her place.

But tradition is very strong in this backward country of ours. We Americans are a backward nation in everything except in the making and using of machines. And we are nowhere more backward than we are in our attitude toward our women. We still, morally, shut the door of her home on a woman. We say to her, "Your home ought to be enough for you if you are a nice woman. Your husband ought to be enough—and your children." If she says, "But they aren't enough—what shall I do?" we say, "Go and have a good time, that's a nice girl. Get yourself a new hat or something, or go to the *matinée* or join a bridge club. Don't worry your pretty head about what is not your business."

If she persists in being interested in things beyond her home, we insist that she must be neglecting her home. If she still persists and makes a success through incredible dogged persistence, we laugh at her. We even sneer at her and sometimes we treat her with unbelievable rudeness. I do not know the Secretary of Labor in our government, but I have seen her. She looks a quiet, serious, unassuming woman. I have taken pains to inquire of people who know, and it seems her home is not neglected. She has done at least as good a job in Washington as a number of men there in leading positions. But the slurs that have been cast upon her, the rudenesses of private and public talk, the injustices that have been done her merely because she is a woman in a place heretofore occupied by a man, have been amazing to a person unaccustomed to the American attitude toward women. It seems nothing short of barbarous.

And yet, vicious circle that it is, I cannot blame Americans for distrusting the ability of their women. For if the intelligent woman obeys the voice of tradition and limits herself to the traditional four walls, she joins the vast ranks of the nervous, restless, average American women whose whimsies torture their families, who spoil the good name of all women because they are often

flighty, unreliable, without good judgment in affairs, and given to self-pity. In short, she becomes a neurotic, if not all the time, a good deal of the time. Without knowing it or meaning it she falls too often to being a petty dictator in the home, a nag to her husband and children, and a gossip among her women friends. Too often too she takes no interest in any matters of social importance and refuses all responsibility in the community which she can avoid. She may be either a gadabout and extravagant or she may turn into a recluse and pride herself on being a "home woman." Neither of these escapes deceives the discerning. When will American men learn that they cannot expect happiness with a wife who is not her whole self? A restless unfulfilled woman is not going to be a satisfied wife or satisfactory lover. It is not that "women are like that." Anyone would be "like that" if he were put into such circumstances—that is, trained and developed for opportunity later denied.

"Plenty of men like that too nowadays," someone may murmur.

Yes, but the times have done it, and not tradition. There is a difference. And one man has as good a chance as another to win or lose, even in hard times. But no woman has a man's chance in hard times, or in any times.

## II

I am not so naïve, however, as to believe that one sex is responsible for this unfortunate plight of the American woman. I am not a feminist, but I am an individualist. I do not believe there is any important difference between men and women—certainly not as much as there may be between one woman and another or one man and another. There are plenty of women—and men, for that matter—who would be completely fulfilled in being allowed to be as lazy as possible. If someone will ensconce them in a pleasant home and pay their bills, they ask no more of life. It is quite all right for these men and women to live thus so long as fools can be found who will pay so much for nothing much in return. Gigolos, male and female, are to be found in every class and in the best of homes. But when a man does not want to be a gigolo he has the freedom to go out and work and create as well as he can. But a woman has not. Even if her individual husband lets her, tradition in society is against her.

For another thing we Americans cannot seem to believe or understand is that women—some women, any woman, or as I believe, most women—are able to be good wives, ardent lovers, excellent mothers, and yet be themselves too. This seems strange, for as a nation we have fitted woman to be an individual as well as a woman by giving her a physical and mental education and a training superior to that of women in any other nation. But when she comes eagerly to life, ready to contribute her share, not only to home, but to government, sciences, and arts, we raise the old sickening cry of tradition, "This isn't your business! Woman's place is in the home—" and we shut the door in her face.

I am aware that at this point American men will be swearing and shouting, "You don't know what you're talking about! Why, we give our women more than any women on earth have!" With that I perfectly agree. American women are the most privileged in the world. They have all the privileges—far too many. They have so many privileges that a good many of them are utterly spoiled. They have privileges but they have no equality. "Nobody keeps them back," the American man declares. Ah, nobody, but everybody! For they are kept back by tradition expressed through the prejudices not only of men but of stupid, unthinking, tradition-bound women. Here is what I heard a few days ago.

A young woman wanted a new book to read and her father offered to send it to her. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Anything, only not one by a woman," she said carelessly. "I have a prejudice against books written by women."

Ignoring the rudeness, I asked, "Why?"

"Oh, I dislike women," she said. What she really meant was she despised women so much that she actually disliked women who did anything beyond the traditional jobs that the average women do. There are thousands of women who uphold medieval tradition in America more heartily than do men—just as in China it is the ignorant tradition-bound women who have clung to foot binding for themselves and their daughters. . . . No, women have many enemies among women. It goes back, of course, to the old jealous sense of general female inferiority. Tradition, if it binds one, should bind all, they feel.

Sometimes, I confess, I do not see how American men can endure some of their women—their imperiousness, their peevishness, their headstrongness, their utter selfishness, their smallness of mind and outlook, their lack of any sense of responsibility toward society, even to be pleasant. And their laziness—look at the motion-picture houses, the theaters, the lecture halls—crowded all day with women! The average house, even with no servant, can be no full-time job or they wouldn't be there in such hordes—they couldn't be there. But children go to school as soon as they stop being babies, and electricity cleans and washes the house and clothing, and husbands are away all day. So what is there for the restless woman to do? She goes to the show—and comes home, if she has any sense, to wonder what life is for, and to think that marriage isn't so much after all, though if she hadn't been married she would have been ashamed of herself. For tradition is there too, and it would have made her seem, if unmarried, unsuccessful as a female.

"But what are we going to do?" the harassed American man cries. "There aren't enough jobs now to go round. And women are getting into industries more and more."

This is nonsense and a masculine bugaboo, though merely getting a job is not what I mean. The truth is the number of women in industries is increasing at so slow a rate that it is shocking when one considers how long they



have had an equal chance with men for education and training. In the past fifty years—that is, half a century, during which education for women has enormously increased—the percentage of women in industry and the professions has increased from fourteen per cent only to twenty-two per cent. That means millions of women have been made ready for work they either had no chance to do or never wanted to do.

As to what men are going to do with women, I do not pretend to know. But I know I have never seen in any country—and I have seen most of the countries of the world—such unsatisfactory personal relationships between men and women as are in America—no, not even in Japan, where women as a class are depressed. For the Japanese are wiser in their treatment of women than we Americans are. They keep them down from the beginning so that they never hope for or expect more than life is to give them. They are not restless or neurotic or despotic, nor are they spoiled children. They have not been trained for equality and they do not expect it. They know they are upper servants, and they fulfill their duties gracefully and ably, and are happier on the whole than women in America. To know what one can have and to do with it, being prepared for no more, is the basis of equilibrium.

### III

No, what is wrong in America is this matter of educating women. Life for the American woman is still controlled by old traditions. Men think of women, if at all, in the old simple traditional ways. Then women ought to be prepared for this sort of life and shaped through childhood and girlhood for what is to come. The root of the discontent in American women is that they are too well educated. What is the use of it? They do not need college educations nor even high school educations. What they ought to have is a simple course in reading, writing, and arithmetic—and advanced courses in cosmetics, bridge, sports, how to conduct a club meeting gracefully, how to be an attractive hostess, with or without servants, and how to deal with very young children in the home. This last course, obviously, should be purely optional.

But all this higher present education is unfortunate. It has led American women into having ideas which they can never realize when they come to maturity. A college education may, for instance, persuade a girl to become interested in biology, which may lead her into wanting to become a doctor. And yet she will never have the chance to become a first-rate doctor, however gifted she is by birth. People will not allow it—not only men, but women will not allow it. They will look at her tentative little shingle and shrug their shoulders and say, "I don't feel I'd *trust* a woman doctor as I would a man." So after a while, since she has to earn something, she takes her shingle down and accepts a secondary position in a hospital or a school or goes into baby-clinic work, supplemented by magazine articles on child care—or she just

marries a doctor. But inside herself she knows she still wants to *be* a doctor, only she cannot. Tradition does not allow it.

Or a college education may lead a girl into wanting to be a banker. It is natural for women to be interested in finance since they own about seventy per cent of America's money. But it is unfortunate if a woman thinks she can be a real banker. I have talked with a good many women who work in our American banking system. Not one is where she hoped to be when she began, and a fair percentage are not where they should be with their high executive ability, or where they would be if they were men. As one of the most brilliant of them said to me bitterly, "I know if I were a man I should now, at the age of fifty, and after thirty years of experience, be a bank president. But I'll never be anything but an assistant to a vice-president. I reached the top—for a woman—years ago. I'll never be allowed to go on."

"Why can't you?" I inquired, being then too innocent.

"They say no one would want to put money in a bank run by a woman," she said.

I pondered this. I had then just come from Shanghai, where one of the best modern banks was run and controlled entirely by modern Chinese women. It was a prosperous bank because most people there thought women were probably more honest than men and more practical in the handling of money. So the Chinese women bankers did very well.

A good deal is said too about the profession of teaching for women. There are a great many women teachers in America—many more in proportion to men than in other countries. Men here, it seems, allow women to teach in lower schools because they themselves do not want to teach in anything less than a college. And even the best men do not like to teach in women's colleges nor in co-educational colleges. The finest teaching in America, I am told, is done by men for men.

As for the arts, I know very well that the odds are strongly against the woman. Granted an equally good product, the man is given the favor always. Women artists in any field are not often taken seriously, however serious their work. It is true that they often achieve high popular success. But this counts against them as artists. American men critics may show respect to a foreign woman artist, feeling that perhaps the foreign women are better than their own. But they cannot believe that the fools they see in department stores, in the subways and buses, or running to the movies and lectures, or even in their own homes, can amount to anything in the arts. Indeed they cannot think of a woman at all, but only of "women." And the pathetic efforts of American women to improve their minds by reading and clubs have only heightened the ridicule and contempt in which their men hold them. To educate women, therefore, to think, so that they need the personal fulfillment of activity and participation in all parts of life is acute cruelty, for they are not allowed this fulfillment. They should be educated not to think beyond the demands of simple household affairs or beyond the small arts and graces of pleasing men

who seem always to want mental rest. The present method is not only cruel; it is extremely wasteful. Good money is spent teaching women to do things for which there will be no need. Men strain themselves to furnish educations for their daughters which they would be happier without, and not only happier but better women because they would be more contented women.

It is not only wasteful but dangerous. To educate women as we do for our present state of traditionalism is to put new wine into old bottles. A good deal of ferment is going on. And if we keep this up more will come of it. No one knows the effect upon children, for instance, of so many discontented women as mothers. Amiable, ignorant, bovine women make much better mothers than neurotic college graduates. And a woman does not need to complain aloud to let her children know she is unhappy. The atmosphere about her is gray with her secret discontent and children live deprived of that essential gayety in which they thrive as in sunshine. So few American women are really gay. This must have an effect.

#### IV

So, though I am impressed with the fact that American women do not, as a group, seem happy, privileged as they are, I am not surprised. I know that happiness comes to an individual only as a result of personal fulfillment through complete functioning of all the energies and capabilities with which one is born. I do not for a moment mean that all women must go out and find jobs and "do something" outside the home. That would be as silly and general a mistake as our present general clinging to tradition. I simply mean let us be realistic. Let us face the fact that as a nation we are in a medieval state of mind about the place of women in society. Let each man ask himself—he need not answer aloud—where he really wants his woman. The majority, if they are honest, must acknowledge that they would like contented adoring women who want no more than their homes. I do not quarrel with that. What is, is. All I say is, let us realize facts. Tradition rules the relation of the sexes in America. Women are not welcome outside the home except in subsidiary positions, doing, on the whole, things men do not want to do. The great injustice to women is in not recognizing this frankly and in not preparing them for it.

Of course, there is the chimeralike possibility that we might change tradition. But I do not see anyone capable of changing it. Men certainly will not. They do not even want to talk about it. They do not want the woman question stirred up, having as they say, "enough on their hands already." To them, of course, women "stirred up" simply means nervous, illogical, clamoring children who must be placated in one way or another. They cannot conceive of woman as a rational being, equal to themselves and not always fundamentally connected with sex. Emotionally, as it has been truly said, many American men are adolescents—kind, delightful, charming adolescents. "He's

just like a boy" seems to be considered a compliment to a man in America. It ought to be an insult. This horrible boyishness lingering in persons who should be adult is as dismaying as mental retardation. It is responsible for our childish tendencies to "jazz things up," to make "whoopce," to think of being drunk, of removing "inhibitions," of playing the clown, as the only way to have a good time, to the complete destruction of adult conversation and real wit and subtler humor. It certainly is responsible for wanting women to be nothing but wives, mothers, or leggy relaxations for tired business men. Even a pretty college girl said despairingly not long ago in my presence, "You can't get anywhere with men if you show any brains. I have to make myself a nitwit if I want dates. Oh, well, that's the way they are!" There are too many nice and rather sad American women who patiently accept even their middle-aged and old men as perennial "boys." "Men are like that," they say, at least as often as men say, "Women are like that."

Nothing could show a greater misunderstanding between the sexes than this frequent fatalistic remark. Neither men nor women are like that if "that" means what they now seem to each other. It is a strange fact that in new America, as in old India or China, the real life of each sex is not with each other but away from each other. Men and women in America meet stiffly for social functions, drink together in an earnest effort to feel less inhibited, play the fool guardedly and feel queer about it afterward. Or they meet for physical sex, in the home or out. And they jog along in family life. Of the delight of exploring each other's differing but equally important personalities and points of view, of the pleasure of real mutual comprehension and appreciation and companionship, there is almost none, inside the home or out. Tradition decrees that after marriage real companionship between persons of opposite sex must cease except between husband and wife. Tradition decrees that all companionship indeed between men and women is tinged with sex. Such an idea as interest in each other as persons, aside from sex, is almost unknown. Women, talking of this among themselves, say, "Men don't want anything else." I am inclined to think they are right. The average American man demands amazingly little from his women—nothing much except to look as pretty as possible on as little money as possible, to run the home economically with as little trouble as possible to the man when he comes home tired. What educated, intelligent, clever, gifted woman is going to be satisfied with that? What average woman would be satisfied even? Ask the average man if he would change places with a woman—any woman. The idea horrifies him. Yet women are far more like him than he knows or wants to know, and modern times have done everything to make her more so.

No, our men, perennial boys, most of them, will not do anything about changing tradition. They do not know how, absorbed as they are in the game of business, abashed as they are in the presence of sex as anything except simply physical, and afraid as they are of women. They are, naturally, afraid of women or they would not cling so to tradition. They were afraid of their

mothers when they were children, their imperious, discontented mothers, and that fear carries over into fear of their wives and fear of all women, in industry as well as at home. It leads to the attitude of petty deception which so many perennially boyish men maintain toward their women.

So, naturally enough, men do not want women "getting too smart." I heard a carpenter working in my home say pontifically to his assistant about to be married, "And why would you want a woman eddicated? Says I, if I want eddication I can go to the public library. A woman should know just so much as when it rains she stands on the sheltered side of the street. It's enough." And after a moment he added solemnly. "You don't want a woman what can talk smart. You want one what can keep quiet smart."

The voice of America's perennial boys, I thought—speaking out in a carpenter, but heard as clearly in the embarrassed reserves of an after-dinner circle in a drawing-room. And yet, I do not blame them. There are so many women who chatter without thought, who stop all attempts at conversation with continual commonplaces uttered with all the petty authority of ignorance. And the fetters of another tradition—that of chivalry—still hang upon American men. Foolish, haughty women, standing in crowded buses, staring at a tired man in a seat, accepting favors as their right; peevish, idle women, wasting their husbands' money; dogmatic women talking ignorantly about practical important matters—men must try to be polite to them all alike. I do not blame American men, except for not seeing that not all women are the same.

We are so clever with machines, we Americans. But we have done a silly thing with our women. We have put modern high-powered engines into old antiquated vehicles. It is no wonder the thing is not working. And there are only two courses to follow if we do want it to work. We must go back to the old simple one-horse-power engine or else we must change the body to suit the engine—one or the other. If the first, then tradition must be held to from the moment a woman is born, not, as it now is, clamped upon her when, after a free and extraordinarily equal childhood and girlhood with boys, she attempts to enter into a free and equal adult life with men and finds it denied her, to discover then that her education has had nothing to do with her life.

Or else we must be willing to let her go on as she began. This means that American men must cease being "sweet boys" and grow up emotionally as well as physically and face women as adult men. But they, poor things, have not been fitted for that either! Besides, of course, they are afraid of what women might do. And women, inexperienced and eager, will probably do as many foolish things as men have until they have had as much practice.

Of one thing I am sure, however. There will be no real content among American women unless they are made and kept more ignorant or unless they are given equal opportunity with men to use what they have been taught. And American men will not be really happy until their women are.

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL MATURITY?

*(From Love in America)**David L. Cohn (1943)*

WHAT has clearly been implied throughout this brief discussion of happiness is that we are, or tend to be, an emotionally adolescent people. Adolescence is a way station in life, not a fixed point or goal. It is characterized usually by a high degree of emotional instability; it is physically and mentally gawky; while the eyes of the adolescent see only black and white, all unconscious of the shadowy gradations where perhaps truth lies. For two reasons, among others, many of us remain emotionally adolescent throughout life. The first is the refusal or the inability to realize that life is tragic. Thus, for example, few Americans have died since the turn of the century. They have "passed on," "been called to a better land," or have "gone to their reward." The undertaker has vanished and is now a "mortician," indistinguishable from a prosperous grocer. The funeral he conducts is filled with geegaws and gadgets. The honoree is decked out at a ghoulish beauty parlor before being placed on exhibit ("Don't he look natural?") in a satin-lined casket that has replaced the old-fashioned coffin. "Ma sure was laid out beautiful," said an Arkansas farm girl of her mother's funeral. But there are other voices:

"Human life! Its duration is momentary, its substance is in perpetual flux, its senses are dim, its physical organism is perishable, its consciousness a vortex, its destiny dark, its repute uncertain—in fact, the material element is a rolling stream; the spiritual element, dreams and vapor; life, a war and a sojourning in a far country; fame, oblivion . . ."

These are the words of Marcus Aurelius, and they might be multiplied many times from the writings of many men, expressing as they do a truth obvious and universal. When understood they do not have the effect of reducing one to impotence, since all is transitory on earth, but tend rather to put one in harmony with men, soil, salt, grass, bread, and stars. And this is to achieve a respect for one's dignity and the dignity of others; a profound compassion and a salutary humility; to acquire some sense of what is worthy and what is meretricious; to know that frustration and pain are of the world along with accomplishment and happiness; to realize that the glory of living may be in the struggle, although it be a fight fought without guerdon and a race run without laurel; and so in the end obtain a rounded harmony in all things, including that central relationship of life called marriage.

"The direct aim of reason," wrote Santayana, "is harmony; yet harmony, when made to rule in life, gives reason a noble satisfaction which we call happiness. Happiness is impossible and even inconceivable to a mind without scope and without pause, a mind driven by craving, pleasure, and fear . . . To be happy . . . you must be reasonable . . . or you must be tamed. You must have taken the measure of your powers, tasted the fruits of your passion,

and learned your place in the world and what things in it can really serve you. To be happy you must be wise. This happiness is sometimes found instinctively and then the rudest fanatic can hardly fail to see how lovely it is; but sometimes it comes of having learned by experience . . . and involves some chastening and some renunciation; but it is not less sweet for having this touch of holiness about it, and the spirit of it is healthy and beneficent . . .”

Measured by these criteria, we who seek happiness so desperately are not likely to find it. We are unreasonable because we look upon marriage as an end when it is and can be but a beginning, since, if it is to live and flourish, it must be constantly renewed. Girls may be brought up to look forward to marrying, but this is a different thing from marriage, for the one implies the notion of finality—of something completed and forever intact—while implicit in the other is the concept of becoming rather than being. Men may marry for the purpose of “settling down,” only to discover too late that a spiritual ferment, a search for a perfection that will never be found, is the condition precedent to spiritual repose. Such concepts we find tedious and emotionally tiring; they suggest the uncompleted task and the unsolved problem. We want to do something and be done with it, and as between the story of the Biblical creation of man and earth in six days and the fact of the thirty million years’ evolution of the eohippus into the horse, we prefer the former as an example of a big job done quickly, efficiently, and finally. That there are not finalities in marriage—not even divorce—and that marriage remains a highly difficult relationship between a man and a woman make no difference to us in our search for happiness in marriage. Nor does it matter that, while we prepare diligently for business, our preparation for the business of living, which is so largely the business of marriage, is at best sketchy and at worst hopelessly inadequate. God will lead the way for the innocents, it is presumed, or if He does not, then the divorce courts will.

The second reason why so many of us remain emotionally adolescent throughout life, and so miss the “noble satisfaction which we call happiness,” is our failure to understand that one must pay—sometimes doubly or triply—for every single blessing of life in or out of marriage. Only by paying does one achieve harmony and become adult. Otherwise one remains querulous, half baked, and with a suspicion of having been cheated or tricked. This is plainly catastrophic to the difficult business of marriage, which in a sense is a never-closing bazaar whose functioning is impossible unless buyer and seller are willing—and even eager—to pay for what they get. Yet individually and as a nation we persist in the dangerous illusion that we can get something for nothing, and thus we are vaguely disturbed before the blow falls and are deeply depressed on the brink of the catastrophe to which such an illusion inevitably brings us. It is only in heaven—and this must be one of its special appeals for us—that you can have your cake and eat it too . . .

A cardinal characteristic of immaturity is dread of reality; the fear or the inability to look facts in the face. It is this dread, on the one hand, and a false

romanticism, on the other, which has caused us to surround marriage with a mawkish sentimentality. Under their spell we have come to believe that if a boy and a girl attend Greenville High, belong to the same church, and have parents who are members of the Lakeside Country Club, they will, if they are in love and believe they can make a go of marriage, achieve success in it. This is to say that they were "made for each other"; that if they did not marry one another neither could find a satisfactory mate among the two billion inhabitants of the earth. It follows that since the couples are made for each other, the arrangement must have been made in heaven, else how, among the spaces of the earth and its myriads of people, could these two have got together. If the arrangement, moreover, was made in heaven through an unerring juggling of propinquities and matching of compatibilities, it must be the perfect arrangement, since heaven deals in no other kind. Thus marriage is made to rest upon the assumption that the couple are predestinedly compatible and their attachment is unique, without regard to the brutal fact that if they had not attended Greenville High and had never met, somewhere else at some other high school or at a church picnic, each would have met some other person for whom his feelings would have been equally unique.

"Love," wrote Santayana, "is indeed much less exacting than it thinks itself. Nine-tenths of its causes are in the lover, for one-tenth that may be in the object. Were the latter not accidentally at hand, an almost identical passion would probably have been felt for someone else; for, although with acquaintance the quality of an attachment adapts itself to the person loved, and makes this person its standard and ideal, the first assault and mysterious glow of the passion is the same for every object. What really affects the character of the love is the lover's temperament, age, and experience. The objects that appeal to each man reveal his nature; but those unparalleled virtues and that unique divinity which the lover discovers there are reflections of his own adoration, things that ecstasy is very cunning in. He loves what he imagines and worships what he creates."

Such a point of view, in our theology, is not only unromantic but is even gross and is cast aside as false. If it is false, however, if indeed heaven had arranged the meeting and marriage of two persons with preordained affinities for one another, then how account for the fact that when the couple have married and the "mysterious glow of passion" cools, they often discover that they have no preordained affinity at all? Can it be that infallible heaven has erred? Or is it that the couple have made a mistake?

The point is, of course, that compatibility is not the result of preordination, accident, or mysterious gift, but of design; and this is to conclude that the romantic concept of marriage is false and dangerous. For compatibility depends in the first place upon the meshing of an enormous range of factors, physical, spiritual, and mental; and in the second place upon a principle of growth, of adaptation, of harmonizing, of a rounded address to the whole



nature of the other person and to all that concerns both parties to a marriage. And since successful marriage leans heavily upon compatibility, in the living room as in the bedroom, it follows that the whole burden ought not to be placed upon heaven, especially in a country given to the pioneer maxim "God helps those who help themselves." It might clear the air and remove the blame from the doors of heaven if we stuck closer to Santayana's dictum that nine-tenths of the causes are in the lover for one-tenth that may be in the object, and it is what the lover does about the nine-tenths that determines whether a marriage is a meeting of minds and bodies fluent for one another and so constitutes a partnership full of beauty and significance or whether it is a mere organization precariously binding two incompatible partners.

In Santayana's terms, every marriage, without regard to heaven, would be happy. For then the husband would have the two perfect wives: Esther Price, the girl next door, whom he married in the Presbyterian church that hot night in June, and the blue-eyed, impossible Helen; while the wife would have the two completely satisfactory husbands—Joe Grubbs, the rising young manager of the City Drugstore, and Leander, forever warm and wet from the waves of the Hellespont.

## LETTERS TO FRANCES SCOTT FITZGERALD

*F. Scott Fitzgerald*

*August 8, 1933  
La Paix, Rodgers' Forge,  
Towson, Maryland.*

Dear Pie:

I feel very strongly about you doing duty. Would you give me a little more documentation about your reading in French? I am glad you are happy—but I never believe much in happiness. I never believe in misery either. Those are things you see on the stage or the screen or the printed page; they never really happen to you in life.

All I believe in in life is the rewards for virtue (according to your talents) and the *punishments* for not fulfilling your duties, which are doubly costly. If there is such a volume in the camp library, will you ask Mrs. Tyson to let you look up a sonnet of Shakespeare's in which the line occurs *Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds*.

Have had no thoughts today; life seems composed of getting up a *Saturday Evening Post* story. I think of you, and always pleasantly; but if you call me "Pappy" again I am going to take the White Cat out and beat his bottom *hard, six times for every time you are impertinent*. Do you react to that?

I will arrange the camp bill.

Half-wit, I will conclude. Things to worry about:

- Worry about courage
- Worry about cleanliness
- Worry about efficiency
- Worry about horsemanship . . .

Things not to worry about:

- Don't worry about popular opinion
- Don't worry about dolls
- Don't worry about the past
- Don't worry about the future
- Don't worry about growing up
- Don't worry about anybody getting ahead of you
- Don't worry about triumph
- Don't worry about failure unless it comes through your own fault
- Don't worry about mosquitoes
- Don't worry about flies
- Don't worry about insects in general
- Don't worry about parents
- Don't worry about boys
- Don't worry about disappointments
- Don't worry about pleasures
- Don't worry about satisfactions

Things to think about:

What am I really aiming at?

How good am I really in comparison to my contemporaries in regard to:

- (a) Scholarship
- (b) Do I really understand about people and am I able to get along with them?
- (c) Am I trying to make my body a useful instrument or am I neglecting it?

With dearest love,

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*August, 1937*<sup>1</sup>

I shall somehow manage not to appear in a taxicab on Thanksgiving and thus disgrace you before all those "nice" girls. Isn't it somewhat old-fashioned to describe girls in expensive backgrounds as "nice"? I will bet two-thirds of the girls at Miss Walker's School have at least one grandparent that peddled old leather in the slums of New York, Chicago, or London, and if I thought

<sup>1</sup> Scott Fitzgerald was in Hollywood, working for the moving pictures, during 1937, 1938, 1939 and 1940, and most of the letters that follow must have been written from there. He made, however, a few short trips to the East, and this letter may have been written from an Eastern address.

you were accepting the standards of the cosmopolitan rich, I would much rather have you in a Southern school, where scholastic standards are not so high and the word "nice" is not debased to such a ludicrous extent. I have seen the whole racket, and if there is any more diastrous road than that from Park Avenue to the Rue de la Paix and back again, I don't know it.

They are homeless people, ashamed of being American, unable to master the culture of another country; ashamed, usually, of their husbands, wives, grandparents, and unable to bring up descendants of whom they could be proud, even if they had the nerve to bear them, ashamed of each other yet leaning on each other's weakness, a menace to the social order in which they live—oh, why should I go on? You know how I feel about such things. If I come up and find you gone Park Avenue, you will have to explain me away as a Georgia cracker or a Chicago killer. God help Park Avenue.

March 15, 1940

I think it was you who misunderstood my meaning about the comrades. The important thing is this: they had best be treated, not as people holding a certain set of liberal or conservative opinions, but rather as you might treat a set of intensely fanatical Roman Catholics among whom you might find yourself. It is not that you should not disagree with them—the important thing is that you should not argue with them. The point is that Communism has become an intensely dogmatic and almost mystical religion, and whatever you say, they have ways of twisting it into shapes which put you in some lower category of mankind ("Fascist," "Liberal," "Trotskyist"), and disparage you both intellectually and personally in the process. They are amazingly well organized. The pith of my advice is: think what you want, the less said the better. . . .

You must have some politeness toward ideas. You can neither cut through, nor challenge nor beat the fact that there is an organized movement over the world before which you and I as individuals are less than the dust. Sometime when you feel very brave and defiant and haven't been invited to one particular college function, read the terrible chapter in *Das Kapital* on "The Working Day," and see if you are ever quite the same.

Spring, 1940

Spring was always an awful time for me about work. I always felt that in the long boredom of winter there was nothing else to do but study. But I lost the feeling in the long, dreamy spring days and managed to be in scholastic hot water by June. I can't tell you what to do about it—all my suggestions seem to be very remote and academic. But if I were with you and we could talk again like we used to, I might lift you out of your trouble about concentration. It really isn't so hard, even with dreamy people like you and me—

it's just that we feel so damned secure at times as long as there's enough in the bank to buy the next meal, and enough moral stuff in reserve to take us through the next ordeal. Our danger is imagining we have resources—material and moral—which we haven't got. One of the reasons I find myself so consistently in valleys of depression is that every few years I seem to be climbing uphill to recover from some bankruptcy. Do you know what bankruptcy exactly means? It means drawing on resources which one does not possess. I thought I was so strong that I never would be ill and suddenly I was ill for three years, and faced with a long, slow uphill climb. Wiser people seem to manage to pile up a reserve—so that if on a night you had set aside to study for a philosophy test you learned that your best friend was in trouble and needed your help, you could skip that night and find you had a reserve of one or two days' preparation to draw on. But I think that, like me, you will be something of a fool in that regard all your life, so I am wasting my words.

Spring, 1940

Anyhow, I am alive again—getting by that October did something—with all its strains and necessities and humiliations and struggles. I don't drink. I am not a great man but sometimes I think the impersonal and objective quality of my talent and the sacrifices of it, in pieces, to preserve its essential value has some sort of epic grandeur. Anyhow, after hours I nurse myself with delusions of that sort. . . .

And I think when you read this book,<sup>1</sup> which will encompass the time when you knew me as an adult, you will understand how intensively I knew your world—not *extensively* because I was so ill and unable to get about. If I live long enough, I'll hear your side of things, but I think your own instincts about your limitations as an artist are possibly best: you might experiment back and forth among the arts and find your niche as I found mine—but I do not believe that so far you are a "natural."

April 12, 1940

You are doing exactly what I did at Princeton. I wore myself out on a musical comedy there for which I wrote book and lyrics, organized and mostly directed while the president played football. Result: I slipped way back in my work, got T.B., lost a year in college—and, irony of ironies, because of a scholastic slip I wasn't allowed to take the presidency of the Triangle. . . .

From your letter I guess you are doing exactly the same thing and it just makes my stomach fall out to think of it. Amateur work is fun but the price for it is just simply tremendous. In the end you get "Thank you" and that's all. You give three performances which everybody promptly forgets and somebody has a breakdown—that somebody being the enthusiast.

<sup>1</sup> *The Last Tycoon*.

May 4, 1940

You are always welcome in California, though. We are even opening our arms to Chamberlain in case the British oust him. We need him for Governor, because we are afraid the Asiatics are going to land from Chinese parasols. Never mind—Santa Barbara will be our Narvik and we'll defend it to our last producer. And remember, even England still has Noel Coward.

I actually have a formulating plan for part of your summer—if it pleases you—and I think I'll have the money to make it good. I'm working hard, guiding by the fever which now hovers quietly around the 99.2 level, which is fairly harmless. Tell Frances Kilpatrick that, though I never met her father, he is still one of my heroes, in spite of the fact that he robbed Princeton of a football championship single-handed—he was probably the greatest end who ever played football. In the future please send me clippings even though you do crack at me in the course of your interviews. I'd rather get them than have you send me accounts of what literary sourbellies write about me in their books. I've been criticized by experts, including myself.

I think I've about finished a swell flicker piece. Did you read me in the current *Esquire* about Orson Welles? Is it funny? Tell me. You haven't answered a question for six letters. Better do so or I'll dock five dollars next week to show you I'm the same old meany.

May 7, 1940

You asked me whether I thought that in the arts it was greater to originate a new form or to perfect it. The best answer is the one that Picasso made rather bitterly to Gertrude Stein:

"You do something first and then somebody else comes along and does it pretty." . . .

In the opinion of any real artist, the inventor—which is to say Giotto or Leonardo—is infinitely superior to the finished Tintoretto, and the original D. H. Lawrences are infinitely greater than the Steinbecks.

May 11, 1940

I'm glad you didn't start going to Princeton at sixteen or you'd be pretty jaded by this time. Yale is a good year ahead of Princeton in sophistication, though—it should be good for another year. Though I loved Princeton, I often felt that it was a by-water, that its snobby institutions were easy to beat and to despise, and unless a man was a natural steeplechaser or a society groom, you'd find your own private intellectual and emotional life. Given that premise, it is a lovely quiet place, gentle and dignified, and it will let you alone. Of course, it is at its absolute worst in the \* \* \* \* atmosphere you described. Sometime go down with a boy on one of those weekends when there's almost nothing to do.

June 12, 1940

I could agree with you as opposed to Dean Thompson if you were getting "B's." Then I would say: As you're not going to be a teacher or a professional scholar, don't try for "A's"—don't take the things in which you can get "A," for you can learn them yourself. Try something hard and new, and try it hard, and take what marks you can get. But you have no such margin of respectability, and this borderline business is a fret to you. Doubt and worry—you are as crippled by them as I am by my inability to handle money or my self-indulgences of the past. It is your Achilles' heel—and no Achilles' heel ever toughened by itself. It just gets more and more vulnerable. What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish now I'd *never* relaxed or looked back—but said at the end of *The Great Gatsby*: "I've found my line—from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty—without this I am nothing."

July 18, 1940

I wonder if you've read anything this summer—I mean any one good book like *The Brothers Karamazov* or *Ten Days That Shook the World* or Renan's *Life of Christ*. You never speak of your reading except the excerpts you do in college, the little short bits that they must perforce give you. I know you have read a few of the books I gave you last summer—then I have heard nothing from you on the subject. Have you ever, for example, read *Père Goriot* or *Crime and Punishment* or even *The Doll's House* or *St. Matthew* or *Sons and Lovers*? A good style simply doesn't *form* unless you absorb half a dozen top-flight authors every year. Or rather it forms, but instead of being a subconscious amalgam of all that you have admired, it is simply a reflection of the last writer you have read, a watered-down journalcese.

July 29, 1940

This job has given me part of the money for your tuition and it comes so hard that I hate to see you spend it on a course like English Prose since 1800. Anybody that can't read modern English prose by themselves is subnormal—and you know it. The chief fault in your style is its lack of distinction—something which is inclined to grow with the years. You had distinction once—there's some in your own diary—and the only way to increase it is to *cultivate your own garden*. And the only thing that will help you is poetry, which is the most concentrated form of style. . . .

Example: You read *Melanctha*, which is practically poetry, and sold a *New Yorker* story—you read ordinary novels and sink back to a Kitty-Foyle-Diary level of average performance. The only sensible course for you at this moment is the one on *English Poetry—Blake to Keats* (English 241). I don't care how clever the other professor is, one can't raise a discussion of modern prose to anything above tea-table level. I'll tell you everything she knows

about it in three hours and guarantee that what *each* of us tells you will be largely wrong, for it will be almost entirely conditioned by our responses to the subject matter. It is a course for Clubwomen who want to continue on from Rebecca and Scarlett O'Hara. . . .

*Strange Interlude* is good. It was good the first time, when Shaw wrote it and called it *Candida*. On the other hand you don't pass an hour of your present life that isn't directly influenced by the devastating blast of light and air that came with Ibsen's *Doll's House*. Nora wasn't the only one who walked out of the *Doll's House*—all the women in Gene O'Neill walked out too. Only they wore fancier clothes. . . .

Well, the old master wearies—the above is really good advice, Pie, in a line where I know my stuff. Unless you can break down your prose a little, it'll stay on the ill-paid journalistic level. And you can do better.

August 3, 1940

It isn't something easy to get started on by yourself. You need, at the beginning, some enthusiast who also knows his way around—John Peale Bishop performed that office for me at Princeton. I had always dabbled in "verse," but he made me see, in the course of a couple of months, the difference between poetry and non-poetry. After that, one of my first discoveries was that some of the professors who were teaching poetry really hated it and didn't know what it was about. I got in a series of endless scraps with them, so that finally I dropped English altogether. . . .

Poetry is either something that lives like fire inside you—like music to the musician or Marxism to the Communist—or else it is nothing, an empty, formalized bore, around which pedants can endlessly drone their notes and explanations. *The Grecian Urn* is unbearably beautiful, with every syllable as inevitable as the notes in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, or it's just something you don't understand. It is what it is because an extraordinary genius paused at that point in history and touched it. I suppose I've read it a hundred times. About the tenth time I began to know what it was about, and caught the chime of it and the exquisite inner mechanics. Likewise with the *Nightingale*, which I can never read through without tears in my eyes; likewise the *Pot of Basil* with its great stanzas about the two brothers: "Why were they proud, etc."; and *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, which has the richest, most sensuous imagery in English, not excepting Shakespeare. And finally his three or four great sonnets: *Bright Star* and the others. . . .

Knowing those things very young and granted an ear, one could scarcely ever afterwards be unable to distinguish between gold and dross in what one read. In themselves those eight poems are a scale of workmanship for anybody who wants to know truly about words, their most utter value for evocation, persuasion or charm. For awhile after you quit Keats all other poetry seems to be only whistling or humming.

August 12, 1940

Working among the poor has differing effects on people. If you're poor yourself, you get their psychology and it's broadening—for example, when a boy of the bourgeoisie ships before the mast on a tramp schooner where he has to endure the same privations as the seamen, undoubtedly he achieves something of their point of view forever. On the contrary, a Bennington girl spending a month in slum work and passing the weekend at her father's mansion in Long Island gets nothing at all except a smug feeling that she is Lady Bountiful.

August 24, 1940

I can imagine the dinner party. I remember taking Zelda to the young \* \* \* \*s when we were first married and it was a pretty frozen dish, though in general the places we went to even from the beginning were many flights up from the average business man's ménage. Business is a dull game, and they pay a big price in human values for their money. They are "all right when you get to know them." I liked some of the young Princeton men in business, but I couldn't stand the Yale and Harvard equivalents because we didn't even have the common ground of the past. The women are empty twirps mostly, easy to seduce and not good for much else. I am not talking about natural society women like \* \* \* \* and \* \* \* \* and some others, who made their lives into pageants, almost like actresses.

However, you seem wise enough to see that there is something in \* \* \* \*s angle. College gives you a head start, especially a girl, and people are not in any hurry to live and think your way. It's all a question of proportion: if you married an army officer you would live half a lifetime of kowtowing to your inferiors until your husband made his way to the top. If, as the chances are, you marry a business man—because for the present business absorbs most of the energetic and attractive boys—you will have to play your cards properly in the business hierarchy. That was why I have always hoped that life would throw you among lawyers or men who were going into politics or big-time journalism. They lead rather larger lives.

Advertising is a racket, like the movies and the brokerage business. You cannot be honest without admitting that its constructive contribution to humanity is exactly minus zero. It is simply a means of making dubious promises to a credulous public. (But if you showed this letter to \* \* \* \*, it would be the end of everything in short order, for a man must have his pride (and the *more* he realizes such a situation, the *less* he can afford to admit it.) If I had been promoted when I was an advertising man, given enough money to marry your mother in 1920, my life might have been altogether different. I'm not sure, though. People often struggle through to what they are in spite of any detours—and possibly I might have been a writer sooner or later anyhow.



## FROM UNDATED LETTERS

A great social success is a pretty girl who plays her cards as carefully as if she were plain.

I felt all my life the absence of hobbies, except such for me abstract and academic ones as military tactics and football. Botany is such a definite thing. It has its feet on the ground. And after reading Thoreau I felt how much I have lost by leaving nature out of my life.

So many writers, Conrad for instance, have been aided by being brought up in a métier utterly unrelated to literature. It gives an abundance of material and, more important, an attitude from which to view the world. So much writing nowadays suffers both from lack of an attitude and from sheer lack of any material, save what is accumulated in a purely social life. The world, as a rule, does not live on beaches and in country clubs.

One time in sophomore year at Princeton Dean West got up and rolled out the great lines of Horace:

*"Integer vitae, scelerisque purus  
Non eget Mauris iaculis neque arcu"—*

—and I knew in my heart that I had missed something by being a poor Latin scholar, like a blessed evening with a lovely girl. It was a great human experience I had rejected through laziness, through having sown no painful seed.

It has been so ironic to me in after life to buy books to master subjects in which I took courses at college and which made no impression on me whatsoever. I once flunked a course on the Napoleonic era, and I now have over 300 books in my library on the subject, and the other "A" scholars wouldn't even remember it now. That was because I had made the mental tie-up that work equals something unpleasant, something to be avoided, something to be postponed. These scholars you speak of as being bright are no brighter than you, the great majority not nearly as quick, nor, probably, as well endowed with memory and perception, but they have made that tie-up, so that something does not stiffen in their minds at the mention that it is a set task. I am so sure that this is your trouble because you are so much like me and because, after a long time milling over the matter, I have concluded that it was mine. What an idiot I was to be disqualified for play by poor work when men of infinitely inferior capacity got high marks without any great effort!

I never blame failure—there are too many complicated situations in life—but I am absolutely merciless toward lack of effort.

The first thing I ever sold was a piece of verse to *Poet Lore* when I was twenty.

While my picture *is* going to be done, the producer is going to *first* do one that has been made for the brave \* \* \* \*, who will defend his country in Hollywood (though summoned back by the British Government). This affects the patriotic and unselfish Scott Fitzgerald to the extent that I receive no more money from that source until the company gets around to it; so will return to my old standby *Esquire*.

How you could possibly have missed the answer to my first question I don't know, unless you skipped pages 160 to 170 in *Farewell To Arms*. There's nothing vague in these questions of mine but they require attention. I hope you've sent me the answer to the second question. The third question is based on the book *Ecclesiastes* in the Bible. It is fifteen pages long, and since you have it in your room you ought to get through it carefully in four or five days. As far as I am concerned, you can skip the wise-cracks in italics on pages 766, 767 and 768. They were written by somebody else and just stuck in there. But read carefully the little introduction on 754 and note also that I do not mean *Ecclesiasticus*, which is something entirely different. Remember when you're reading it that it is one of the top pieces of writing in the world. Notice that Ernest Hemingway got a title from the third paragraph. As a matter of fact the thing is full of titles. The paragraph on page 756 sounds like the confession of a movie producer, even to the swimming pools.

Am glad you were reading about Twentieth Century Sophists. You meet them every day. They see their world falling to pieces and know all the answers, and are not going to do anything about it.

We have reached a censorship barrier in *Infidelity*, to our infinite disappointment. It *won't* be Joan's next picture and we are setting it aside awhile till we can think of a way of half-witting half-wit Hayes and his legion of decency. Pictures needed cleaning up in 1932-33 (remember I didn't like you to see them?), but because they were suggestive and salacious. Of course, the moralists now want to apply that to *all* strong themes—so the crop of the last two years is feeble and false, unless it deals with children. Anyhow we're starting a new story and a safe one.

About *adjectives*: all fine prose is based on the verbs carrying the sentences. They make sentences move. Probably the finest technical poem in English is Keats' *Eve of Saint Agnes*. A line like:

The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass

is so alive that you race through it, scarcely noticing it, yet it has colored the whole poem with its movement—the limping, trembling, and freezing is

going on before your own eyes. Would you read that poem for me, and report?

Don't be a bit discouraged about your story not being tops. At the same time, I am not going to encourage you about it, because, after all, if you want to get into the big time, you have to have your own fences to jump, and learn from experience. Nobody ever became a writer just by wanting to be one. If you have anything to say, anything you feel nobody has ever said before, you have got to feel it so desperately that you will find some way to say it that nobody has ever found before, so that the thing you have to say and the way of saying it blend as one matter—as indissolubly as if they were conceived together. . . .

Let me preach again for a moment: I mean that what you have felt and thought will by itself invent a new style, so that when people talk about style they are always a little astonished at the newness of it, because they think that it is only *style* that they are talking about, when what they are talking about is the attempt to express a new idea with such force that it will have the originality of the thought. It is an awfully lonesome business, and, as you know, I never wanted you to go into it, but if you are going into it at all, I want you to go into it knowing the sort of things that took me years to learn.

All good writing is *swimming under water* and holding your breath.

The conclusion is: it will not win you financial independence or immortality. But you will be wise to publish it, if you can—if for no gain and only in a college magazine. It will give you a sense of your own literary existence, and put you in touch with others trying the same thing. In a literary way I cannot help you beyond a point. I might say that I don't think anyone can write succinct prose unless they have at least tried and failed to write a good iambic pentameter sonnet, and read Browning's short dramatic poems, etc.—but that was my personal approach to prose. Yours may be different, as Ernest Hemingway's was. But I wouldn't have written this long letter unless I distinguished, underneath the sing-song lilt of your narrative, some traces of a true rhythm that is earmarked Scottina. There is as yet no honesty—the reader will say “So what?” But when in a freak moment you will want to give the low-down, not the scandal, not the merely *reported* but the *profound* essence of what happened at a prom or after it, perhaps that honesty will come to you—and then you will understand how it is possible to make even a forlorn Laplander *feel* the importance of a trip to Cartier's!

Most of my contemporaries did not get started at twenty-two, but usually at about twenty-seven to thirty or even later, filling in the interval with anything from journalism [or] teaching [to] sailing a tramp schooner and going to wars. The talent that matures early is usually of the poetic [type], which mine was in large part. The prose talent depends on other factors—assimila-

tion of material and careful selection of it, or, more bluntly: having something to say and an interesting, highly developed way of saying it.

I'm going into a huddle on this script and probably won't be able to write you again at length before Vassar starts. I read the story in *College Bazaar* and was very pleased with it. You've put in some excellent new touches and its only fault is the jerkiness that goes with a story that has often been revised. Stories are best written in either one jump or three, according to the length. The three-jump story should be done on three successive days, then a day or so for revise and off she goes. This, of course, is the ideal—in many stories one strikes a snag that must be hacked at, but, on the whole, stories that drag along or are terribly difficult (I mean a difficulty that comes from a poor conception and consequent faulty construction) never flow quite as well in the reading.

Again let me repeat that if you start any kind of a career following the footsteps of Cole Porter and Rogers and Hart, it might be an excellent try. Sometimes I wish I had gone along with that gang, but I guess I am too much a moralist at heart, and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form, rather than to entertain them.

I started Tom Wolfe's book on your recommendation. It seems better than *Time and the River*. He has a fine inclusive mind, can write like a streak, has a great deal of emotion, though a lot of it is maudlin and inaccurate but his awful secret transpires at every crevice—he did not have anything particular to say! The stuff about the GREAT VITAL HEART OF AMERICA is just simply corny.

He recapitulates beautifully a great deal of what Walt Whitman said and Dostoevsky said and Nietzsche said and Milton said, but he himself, unlike Joyce and T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway, has nothing really new to add. All right—it's all a mess and it's too bad about the individual—so what? Most writers line themselves up along a solid gold bar like Ernest's courage or Joseph Conrad's art or D. H. Lawrence's intense cohabitations, but Wolfe is too "smart" for this, and I mean smart in its most belittling and modern sense. Smart like Fadiman in the *New Yorker*, smart like the critics whom he so pretends to despise. However, the book doesn't commit the cardinal sin: it doesn't fail to live. But I'd like you to think, sometime, how and in what way you think it is superior to such a piece of Zolaesque naturalism as Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* or if it is superior at all. . . .

I'm taking a day off from my novel to go to the dentist, the doctor and my agent, to the latter in order to discuss picture business when and if I go back to it in February.

Once one is caught up into the material world, not one person in ten thousand finds the time to form literary taste, to examine the validity of

philosophic concepts for himself or to form what, for lack of a better phrase, I might call the wise and tragic sense of life.

By this I mean the thing that lies behind all great careers, from Shakespeare's to Abraham Lincoln's, and as far back as there are books to read—the sense that life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the redeeming things are not “happiness and pleasure” but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle. Having learned this in theory from the lives and conclusions of great men, you can get a hell of a lot more enjoyment out of whatever bright things come your way.

You speak of how good your generation is, but I think they share with every generation since the Civil War in America the sense of being somehow about to inherit the earth. You've heard me say before that I think the faces of most American women over thirty are relief maps of petulant and bewildered unhappiness.

“Those debutante parties in New York are the rendezvous of a gang of professional idlers—parasites, pansies, failures, the silliest type of sophomores, young customers' men from Wall Street and hangers-on. The very riff-raff of social New York who would exploit a child like Scottie with flattery and squeeze her out until she is a limp colorless rag. In one more year she can cope with them. In three more years it will be behind her. This year she is still puppy enough to be dazzled. She will be infinitely better off here with me than mixed up with that sort of people. I'd rather have an angry little girl on my hands for a few months than a broken neurotic for the rest of my life.” But I don't have to tell you this—you probably read the *Life* article on the dim-witted \* \* \* \* girl and the razz on her in the *New Yorker*.

## PARENTS AND PARADES

Gretchen Finletter (1944)

### I

PARENTS, I suppose, were as much a problem formerly as they are today. Unless one watched them like foxes, they might try out some bright new scheme of their own. Samuel Butler says in *The Way of All Flesh*: “Why cannot we be buried as eggs in neat little cells with thousand-pound Bank of England notes wrapped round us and wake to find papa and mamma have been eaten by sparrows some weeks before we began to live consciously?”

I did not wish for anything so drastic. I admired my mother and father deeply, but of course I wanted them to be exactly like other parents. As I think back, no two were like another two, but there was a kind of type—a

father who went downtown in the morning and didn't hang around the house, a gentle mother with marcelled hair who didn't say much.

Now here was something strange: I did not suffer for my friends in similar predicaments. I remember one father who always kissed his little daughter's companions good-bye and gave off a great whiff of old brandy. That did not seem odd to me. I simply thought how expensive he smelled.

And today, though I remember how I felt, life has apparently taught me nothing, for I find that I am causing my own children the same agony. I put them in charge of conductors when they travel, which humiliates them; I don't know the difference between Jimmy Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey or really quite who they are; I call j.g.'s ensigns—in fact, hardly a day goes by that I haven't made a bad mistake.

But here is the difference: I am told my errors loudly and publicly. When I was young we were respectful. We didn't dare do much more than hint. We just suffered.

My first embarrassment started over my father. As a reward for having recovered from scarlet fever, my mother told me I could give a party the way I wanted. I knew exactly the way I wanted it—as near a duplication as possible of the other parties I had attended.

I had been to a big school for a year, so I only had fourteen best friends. These would have to be invited. Then my mother suggested I include a child of a friend of hers. I refused. She didn't go to my school; *ipso facto*, no one would like her.

I went out with Minnie to a stationery shop and bought a box of invitations. On each letterhead was a pale-blue shepherdess with a crook, and under her was printed: "Won't you come to my party on—" Then there were spaces to indicate the day, the time, and the place, and in the left-hand corner, "The Favor of a Reply is requested."

I next demanded that my little sisters should not be around and butt in, as I hospitably put it. I particularly did not want Anita. She still used a bib at table and needed it. Minnie, who always liked the newest youngest the best, was very hurt by this. She was under the delusion that she could make Anita's hair curl. Her efforts only produced three corkscrews on one side. I told her that I thought Baby Anita was repulsive and I did not want my friends to see her. My mother announced that Anita was her most beautiful child:

Polly was allowed to be present by the simple expedient of telling me she did not want to come and would rather stay upstairs. This psychology always worked with me, and I begged her to attend. Though Alice seemed bossy to me, I needed her. She was a little older and I felt she would give the whole affair tone. She was going to run the games.

It took me several days to decide what we were going to eat. Finally and with justifiable pride I brought my mother the bill of fare: creamed chicken,

peas; ice cream (not the green kind); cocoa. My mother, in an imaginative burst, added snappers for the table and peppermints.

The party was scheduled to run from four to six, with supper at half past five. At three o'clock I was waiting fully dressed, and at a quarter to four everyone had arrived.

After a nervous interval, while we shook hands and eyed each other's clothes, Alice announced that the games were to start. It was a Salmagundi affair with four tables at which different competitions took place: threading needles, jackstraws, Hearts, and Old Maid. The winner at each table, after pasting a gold star on a piece of red cardboard, advanced to the next event, and she who made the four stars first, won. The room became noisy and I relaxed.

But somehow the time element had been miscalculated. At ten minutes to five the games were all over and there were still forty minutes until supper. I have since seen this situation at parties for grown-ups, when things do not proceed according to plan, and I have recognized the panic on the face of the hostess. Alice, however, was equal to it. She merely stated that there would be a short interval before the next event.

Having taken a big dose of Sir Walter Scott, she then announced a new game called *The Garde Joyeux* and *The Garde Douloureux*. It was a kind of glorified Prisoner's Base, each side receiving high-sounding titles which they lost if they were captured.

In the middle of this my father entered the room, and at the same moment the waitress announced supper. My father then did a horrifying thing. He went to the piano and started to play a March. I was so appalled at this break with custom that I could not speak. Then I signaled to him to stop.

"Louder?" said my father and played on.

"Supper is served," repeated the waitress.

I reached the piano. "Don't play!" I begged. "None of the fathers play piano!"

"More fools they," replied my father, continuing. "Now all of you march around the room twice." We marched around the room twice and I did not dare lift my eyes.

Then something strange happened: my friends did not want to go in to supper. They wanted him to play to them again. They *liked* it. My mortification almost turned to pride, but not quite. I was not yet sure. This might only be a display of their impeccable manners. But when they shook hands with my mother and said, "Thank-you-for-the-lovely-party," it did sound almost genuine.

## II

My mother had—and still has—strong opinions on the questions of the day. Though I never thought of it as quarreling, as children we were used to plenty of disagreement between my parents. My mother had great wit, and

if she could not win by argument, she could often snatch victory by the flash of her repartee.

She was very clear and articulate and usually had the facts at her fingertips; but if she was cornered and no retort came to her, she would announce that she had reached her conclusion because she "felt it in her bones." My father would declare he had just as many bones, they were just as sensitive, and they told him differently. But we believed my mother had some super-perceptive fluid tucked away in her anatomy.

The arguments usually took place at table and ranged all the way from William Howard Taft to how low a picture should be hung. My sisters and I would join in, defending the parent we felt was the weaker at the moment.

There were certain rules. My mother, coming of a political family, had a corner on public questions—and on the whole won in this field. My father went undisputed in the realm of music. But there was a great No Man's Land between those two areas. In the fought-over territory were interior decoration, religion, food, education, relatives—well, all the things that go to make up living.

I was so used to disagreement that when I began visiting my friends, I kept waiting for the scrap to start. At first the quiet meals seemed wonderful and like a beautiful set in a play, but then I would become homesick and want to get back to where everyone cared passionately about everyone else's opinions and all expressed themselves in an unvarnished way.

The question of religion was a curving line between my parents. My father usually had a concert on Sundays and did not go to church. He did not think much of the music that was played there—I think it made him nervous—and anyhow, Sunday was his busy day. He did not, however, feel any the less religious or any less an authority with my mother in understanding the workings of the Deity. He always referred to God as The Almighty, and this practice annoyed my mother. I think she felt that if my father did not work enough at religion to go to church, as she did, and did not read the religious books, as she did, he should not be so know-it-all about what The Almighty was up to. She would tell him he didn't know what he was talking about.

My mother not only went to church but she listened carefully, and this habit sometimes caused her daughters suffering.

A new young clergyman would start in with his sermon and all would be well if he kept it on a vague and spiritual height. But if he was a practical cleric he would try to hitch his text to some question of the day and he would not always be on the party line. He might also be in a wonderful haze as to his facts.

I would receive a slight nudge from one of my sisters. But I did not need the nudge, I had heard the clergyman announce, "The Congress of the United States must make Covenants betwixt the nations, even as the Lord commanded Moses with the Tribes of Israel."



I saw my mother's face flush. Then, though I was in a sitting position, I would close my eyes and start to pray in real earnest. I would implore God to get that cleric to recant before it was too late. I knew He could do nothing with my mother.

After the Benediction the clergyman would stand outside to greet the congregation as they left the church. We always hung back far behind my mother. The clergyman would extend his hand with a peaceful smile.

"Do you not realize," my mother would demand, "that a treaty with a foreign power must be ratified by a two-thirds vote in the Senate, unlike a bill, which needs a majority in both Houses? It has nothing whatsoever to do with the Laws of Moses!"

The Reverend reeled. Here was living proof that someone had listened to him. He had been hit on the head and yet he was fascinated. Might he call? Might he bring a small quotation from a little book? It had great bearing on this very interesting question. My mother, still shaking her head disapprovingly, told him that he might come, and with red faces we walked home.

The Reverend came with his little book, but then my mother gave him three large books and told him to read them *carefully*. And then he came often and became charmed by my non-churchgoing father. He would drop in for lunch and my father would tell him what St. Peter said to the two Irishmen who wanted to get into Heaven, or expound his views, and the clergyman would nod in solemn agreement.

This would infuriate my mother. She had netted this bird. He should be able to see through my father and recognize that he had no idea what he was talking about!

### III

My mother became a suffragist. The suffragettes in England were having a real fight, chaining themselves to posts, destroying the golf green of members of Parliament, being jailed and then starving themselves. They were a courageous lot and broke the ground for their American sisters.

In this country there was strong feeling, but it did not take so physical a form. There was a big section in the press which made fun of the women, and there were plenty of men and other women who were against the giving of the ballot. It took guts to fight for the cause, and a tough spirit to withstand the ridicule.

Alice Duer Miller ran a page in the *New York Tribune* called "Are Women People?" It was full of wit and became one of the pivotal points of the fight.

A group of women went down to Washington to attend the suffrage hearings. Chairman Webb cried out to the suffragists when they appeared: "Why do you come here and bother us?"

Alice Duer Miller answered in her column:—

Girls, girls, the worst has happened;  
Our Cause is at its ebb.  
How could you go and do it!  
You've bothered Mr. Webb!

Concerning a Congressional obstructionist, she wrote:—

"Oh, no, I don't approve of giving women the vote. Women," he said, "are something divine, apart, Something mysterious, precious, fair and remote, Caring for nothing but love, religion and art."

"But women are really not like that," said I.  
"I like to think of them so," was his reply.

One of the arguments related to the prejudice that existed against women in the fields of medicine and law, and even in the church. If they went to universities and did as well as the men, why should they not have an equal chance in the professions?

I remember that then I became depressed. I was not very old and it seemed to me that if I ever got through school, which was already becoming difficult, I should not then be happily quit of it all, but should have to go on and on. In school we were told ambiguously that we must lead useful lives, but in the suffrage world words were not minced; we were told we had to have careers, and fight to hold them, and do even better than the men.

Like most little girls, I liked to play House. I did not think of having a husband, but I did think of having children—five of them, two boys and three girls. I knew their names and how old they were going to be. They were apparently going to spring full-armed like Minerva, one at the age of five, twins at age eight, one at nine, and one at nine and a half. I knew exactly how I would dress them. Now all this was to be denied me.

Did I really want to be a great lawyer? Should I be happy removing an appendix? I began to feel guilty and troubled. I studied the pictures of the London women in the Sunday papers. One was being carried off by two policemen, and another was lying on a cot swallowing an enormous hose. These women were doing this so that I could become a U. S. Senator. I ought to be grateful. I wasn't.

I wished my mother didn't care so. A lot of the other ladies seemed so unaware, and though I felt they had none of my mother's spirit, their children seemed less weighed down by their future responsibilities.

My mother planned to march in the first big suffrage parade. Nowadays women will march anywhere at the drop of a hat, dressed as drum majors or Puritan maids, but the first suffrage parade caused a lot of ridicule, and

it took belief and nerve to march. My father was very proud of my mother. I think he would have paraded too if he had been invited, and he wanted her to get her due.

#### IV

The parade took place on a May day, at five in the afternoon. The line of march was scheduled to go from Washington Square to Carnegie Hall, where a mass meeting was to take place in the evening.

The day before, there were notices in the papers from Mrs. Blatch giving the marchers their orders, advising them to look neat and keep their heads up, for on them depended the implications of the day.

My mother wore a white serge suit which just cleared the ground, and a white hat on the front of which was a feathered owl's head with big yellow glass eyes. The hat was held on by two long hatpins. Most of the women wore white; those who did not have this costume were in dark blue. There was also a special suffrage hat which cost thirty-nine cents, and a number of the ladies pinned it on.

The marchers were told to go in groups by profession or college. "If you have no profession or diploma," read the order, "if you are just married women, you are to march with your district to educate your Senator."

It was a perfect spring day. The crowd collected early along the line of march, and by three o'clock the sidewalks along Fifth Avenue were jammed. My mother went off to join her district, and there was a light in her eye. We each shook her by the hand and wished her luck. Then my father and his four daughters struggled over to the Avenue and the Bryce house, where we were to watch the great event.

We shoved our way up the crowded steps. There were hundreds of people about, and they were obviously out for the fun. They were going to make the ladies the butts for all possible humor. Passing in and out among them were the anti-suffragists, distributing leaflets and wearing holy yet triumphant smiles. This march, they had little doubt, was going to fix their rivals.

We all became nervous. Suppose someone threw an egg at my mother. What ought we to do? We opened the big windows wide and looked anxiously down the empty Avenue and at the seething crowd. A fight between two women was taking place on a side street. One of them had kicked a basket of anti-suffrage literature into the gutter, and a pleased circle formed. But there was an interruption. There was the sound of a distant band. All eyes turned from the two women.

Coming up the Avenue was a line of mounted police. The band sounded louder and there appeared fifty-four horsewomen of the Suffrage Cavalry, mounted on the shiniest of steeds and all wearing black hats cockaded in green and purple. On a rearing bay sat Inez Milholland in a linen crash suit.

The crowd looked at that beautiful girl on her plunging animal and gasped. The parade was on.

The band drummed by and then came the marchers in straight rows, some carrying banners or slogans, and all wearing ribbons across their chests, and the suffrage emblem. Some were older women, some were young and lovely, but every face had on it an expression so resolute and serious that it silenced the milling crowd. There was a hush and then the applause began. I remember a shiver going up my spine and I was suddenly proud that I was related to this march.

Said the violently anti-suffragist *New York Times*: "It was a crowd far larger than that which greeted the home-coming of Theodore Roosevelt. Gallantry aside, one is forced to say that the paraders were well worth looking at. Many were young and attractive, nearly all were becomingly gowned, all stepped out like women unafraid."

But in its editorial the *Times* became more severe. "If the women try hard enough to get the ballot, they will get it and play havoc with it for themselves and society if the men are not firm and wise enough, and it may well be said, masculine enough to prevent them."

There were in all some ten thousand marchers. Following the first groups came the college women in their caps and gowns, then the teachers. They received rousing cheers from their pupils, who had collected in knots and were waiting for them. A flock of high school girls swung into the line in gym suits, middy blouses, and red ties, with their arms extended to hold a great flag carried flat. "All this," said their banner, "is a Natural Consequence of Teaching Girls to Read."

Next appeared a band playing, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching." Those on the sidelines took up the refrain and sang, "The Girls Are Marching." Two carriages appeared, driven, of course, by women, in which sat white-haired suffrage veterans. Another band swept up the Avenue.

But the crowd, which was gay and excited, still wanted some fun. The parade was full of color and music; they were learning a lot of facts from the slogans; they had never realized before that women worked in such a variety of fields; they had seen hundreds of pretty faces which had surprised them, but they hadn't yet had a big laugh. Then the moment came.

Up the Avenue paraded the Men's League for Women Voters, eight hundred of them. There had been no attempt at uniformity in their dress. Some wore frock coats and high silk hats, some business suits and derbies. All carried little flags. Never were early Christians received with more delight by the lions. There was a roar of expectant pleasure.

As is the way of parades, traffic had to cross the Avenue and the gallant Eight Hundred were forced to pause several minutes. The sidewalks let them have it.

"Can't you fellows get a wife? Why not try up ahead!"

"Three cheers for the henpecked!"

"Where are your aprons?"

"Aw, Susie, are the dishes washed?"

"Who's minding the babies?"

The men took it good-naturedly. A distinguished doctor with a full beard stood at the head of a battalion of physicians. "Look at the bearded lady!" This sally received appreciative guffaws.

Finally the band struck up "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl Who Married Dear Old Dad," and the brave men marched on, but there was a last, parting shot: "It's your chests you throw out, not your stomachs!"

Harvard and Princeton had sent delegations. The Harvard students wore their black gowns and mortarboards. When they passed the Union Club they waved at the members who were sitting in the windows. They were met by stony looks of disapproval. In this instance the sex was not hanging together.

We were still at the Bryce windows waiting for my mother. The parade continued, more bands—there were twenty-six of them—more women, a group of actresses, the laundry workers, the milliners, more districts. Then one of my sisters screamed out: "Look—in the second line of the third group—at the end!"

There was a white hat with an owl's head in front. My father stood up. "Now, when I give the signal."

The line drew nearer. "One, two, three," cried my father. "Hip, hip, hooray, hooray, hooray!"

We all cheered. The crowd joined in and cheered with us. We waved our handkerchiefs. But my mother kept her eyes straight ahead. She says she never heard us.

## DISCOVERY OF A FATHER

*Sherwood Anderson (1939)*

ONE of the strangest relationships in the world is that between father and son. I know it now from having sons of my own.

A boy wants something very special from his father. You hear it said that fathers want their sons to be what they feel they cannot themselves be, but I tell you it also works the other way. I know that as a small boy I wanted my father to be a certain thing he was not. I wanted him to be a proud, silent, dignified father. When I was with other boys and he passed along the street, I wanted to feel a glow of pride: "There he is. That is my father."

But he wasn't such a one. He couldn't be. It seemed to me then that he was always showing off. Let's say someone in our town had got up a show. They were always doing it. The druggist would be in it, the shoe-store clerk, the horse doctor, and a lot of women and girls. My father would manage to get the chief comedy part. It was, let's say, a Civil War play and he was a comic

Irish soldier. He had to do the most absurd things. They thought he was funny, but I didn't.

I thought he was terrible. I didn't see how Mother could stand it. She even laughed with the others. Maybe I would have laughed if it hadn't been my father.

Or there was a parade, the Fourth of July or Decoration Day. He'd be in that, too, right at the front of it, as Grand Marshal or something, on a white horse hired from a livery stable.

He couldn't ride for shucks. He fell off the horse and everyone hooted with laughter, but he didn't care. He even seemed to like it. I remember once when he had done something ridiculous, and right out on Main Street, too. I was with some other boys and they were laughing and shouting at him and he was shouting back and having as good a time as they were. I ran down an alley back of some stores and there in the Presbyterian Church sheds I had a good long cry.

Or I would be in bed at night and Father would come home a little lit up and bring some men with him. He was a man who was never alone. Before he went broke, running a harness shop, there were always a lot of men loafing in the shop. He went broke, of course, because he gave too much credit. He couldn't refuse it and I thought he was a fool. I had got to hating him.

There'd be men I didn't think would want to be fooling around with him. There might even be the superintendent of our schools and a quiet man who ran the hardware store. Once, I remember, there was a white-haired man who was a cashier of the bank. It was a wonder to me they'd want to be seen with such a windbag. That's what I thought he was. I know now what it was that attracted them. It was because life in our town, as in all small towns, was at times pretty dull and he livened it up. He made them laugh. He could tell stories. He'd even get them to singing.

If they didn't come to our house they'd go off, say at night, to where there was a grassy place by a creek. They'd cook food there and drink beer and sit about listening to his stories.

He was always telling stories about himself. He'd say this or that wonderful thing had happened to him. It might be something that made him look like a fool. He didn't care.

If an Irishman came to our house, right away Father would say he was Irish. He'd tell what county in Ireland he was born in. He'd tell things that happened there when he was a boy. He'd make it seem so real that, if I hadn't known he was born in southern Ohio, I'd have believed him myself.

If it was a Scotchman, the same thing happened. He'd get a burr into his speech. Or he was a German or a Swede. He'd be anything the other man was. I think they all knew he was lying, but they seemed to like him just the same. As a boy that was what I couldn't understand.

And there was Mother. How could she stand it? I wanted to ask but never did. She was not the kind you asked such questions.

I'd be upstairs in my bed, in my room above the porch, and Father would be telling some of his tales. A lot of Father's stories were about the Civil War. To hear him tell it he'd been in about every battle. He'd known Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and I don't know how many others. He'd been particularly intimate with General Grant so that when Grant went East, to take charge of all the armies, he took Father along.

"I was an orderly at headquarters and Sam Grant said to me, 'Irve,' he said, 'I'm going to take you along with me.'"

It seems he and Grant used to slip off sometimes and have a quiet drink together. That's what my father said. He'd tell about the day Lee surrendered and how, when the great moment came, they couldn't find Grant.

"You know," my father said, "about General Grant's book, his memoirs. You've read of how he said he had a headache and how, when he got word that Lee was ready to call it quits, he was suddenly and miraculously cured.

"Huh," said Father. "He was in the woods with me.

"I was in there with my back against a tree. I was pretty well corned. I had got hold of a bottle of pretty good stuff.

"They were looking for Grant. He had got off his horse and come into the woods. He found me. He was covered with mud.

"I had the bottle in my hand. What'd I care? The war was over. I knew we had them licked."

My father said that he was the one who told Grant about Lee. An orderly riding by had told him, because the orderly knew how thick he was with Grant. Grant was embarrassed.

"But, Irve, look at me. I'm all covered with mud," he said to Father.

And then, my father said, he and Grant decided to have a drink together. They took a couple of shots and then, because he didn't want Grant to show up potted before the immaculate Lee, he smashed the bottle against the tree.

"Sam Grant's dead now and I wouldn't want it to get out on him," my father said.

That's just one of the kind of things he'd tell. Of course, the men knew he was lying, but they seemed to like it just the same.

When we got broke, down and out, do you think he ever brought anything home? Not he. If there wasn't anything to eat in the house, he'd go off visiting around at farm houses. They all wanted him. Sometimes he'd stay away for weeks, Mother working to keep us fed, and then home he'd come bringing, let's say, a ham. He'd got it from some farmer friend. He'd slap it on the table in the kitchen. "You bet I'm going to see that my kids have something to eat," he'd say, and Mother would just stand smiling at him. She'd never say a word about all the weeks and months he'd been away, not leaving us a cent for food. Once I heard her speaking to a woman in our street. Maybe the woman had dared to sympathize with her. "Oh," she said, "it's all right. He isn't ever dull like most of the men in this street. Life is never dull when my man is about."

But often I was filled with bitterness, and sometimes I wished he wasn't my father. I'd even invent another man as my father. To protect my mother I'd make up stories of a secret marriage that for some strange reason never got known. As though some man, say the president of a railroad company or maybe a Congressman, had married my mother, thinking his wife was dead and then it turned out she wasn't.

So they had to hush it up but I got born just the same. I wasn't really the son of my father. Somewhere in the world there was a very dignified, quite wonderful man who was really my father. I even made myself half believe these fancies.

And then there came a certain night. Mother was away from home. Maybe there was church that night. Father came in. He'd been off somewhere for two or three weeks. He found me alone in the house, reading by the kitchen table.

It had been raining and he was very wet. He sat and looked at me for a long time, not saying a word. I was startled, for there was on his face the saddest look I had ever seen. He sat for a time, his clothes dripping. Then he got up.

"Come on with me," he said.

I got up and went with him out of the house. I was filled with wonder but I wasn't afraid. We went along a dirt road that led down into a valley, about a mile out of town, where there was a pond. We walked in silence. The man who was always talking had stopped his talking.

I didn't know what was up and had the queer feeling that I was with a stranger. I don't know whether my father intended it so. I don't think he did.

The pond was quite large. It was still raining hard and there were flashes of lightning followed by thunder. We were on a grassy bank at the pond's edge when my father spoke, and in the darkness and rain his voice sounded strange.

"Take off your clothes," he said. Still filled with wonder, I began to undress. There was a flash of lightning and I saw that he was already naked.

Naked, we went into the pond. Taking my hand, he pulled me in. It may be that I was too frightened, too full of a feeling of strangeness, to speak. Before that night my father had never seemed to pay any attention to me.

"And what is he up to now?" I kept asking myself. I did not swim very well, but he put my hand on his shoulder and struck out into the darkness.

He was a man with big shoulders, a powerful swimmer. In the darkness I could feel the movement of his muscles. We swam to the far edge of the pond and then back to where we had left our clothes. The rain continued and the wind blew. Sometimes my father swam on his back, and when he did he took my hand in his large powerful one and moved it over so that it rested always on his shoulder. Sometimes there would be a flash of lightning and I could see his face quite clearly.



It was as it was earlier, in the kitchen, a face filled with sadness. There would be the momentary glimpse of his face, and then again the darkness, the wind and the rain. In me there was a feeling I had never known before.

It was a feeling of closeness. It was something strange. It was as though there were only we two in the world. It was as though I had been jerked suddenly out of myself, out of my world of the schoolboy, out of a world in which I was ashamed of my father.

He had become blood of my blood; he the strong swimmer and I the boy clinging to him in the darkness. We swam in silence, and in silence we dressed in our wet clothes and went home.

There was a lamp lighted in the kitchen, and when we came in, the water dripping from us, there was my mother. She smiled at us. I remember that she called us "boys." "What have you boys been up to?" she asked, but my father did not answer. As he had begun the evening's experience with me in silence, so he ended it. He turned and looked at me. Then he went, I thought, with a new and strange dignity, out of the room.

I climbed the stairs to my own room, undressed in darkness and got into bed. I couldn't sleep and did not want to sleep. For the first time I knew that I was the son of my father. He was a storyteller as I was to be. It may be that I even laughed a little softly there in the darkness. If I did, I laughed knowing that I would never again be wanting another father.

## THE FLY

*Katharine Mansfield (1922)*

"Y'ARE very snug in here," piped old Mr. Woodifield, and he peered out of the great, green leather armchair by his friend the boss's desk as a baby peers out of its pram. His talk was over; it was time for him to be off. But he did not want to go. Since he had retired, since his . . . stroke, the wife and the girls kept him boxed up in the house every day of the week except Tuesday. On Tuesday he was dressed up and brushed and allowed to cut back to the City for the day. Though what he did there the wife and girls couldn't imagine. Made a nuisance of himself to his friends, they supposed. . . . Well, perhaps so. All the same, we cling to our last pleasures as the tree clings to its last leaves. So there sat old Woodifield, smoking a cigar and staring almost greedily at the boss, who rolled in his office chair, stout, rosy, five years older than he, and still going strong, still at the helm. It did one good to see him.

Wistfully, admiringly, the old voice added, "It's snug in here, upon my word!"

"Yes, it's comfortable enough," agreed the boss, and he flipped the *Financial Times* with a paper-knife. As a matter of fact he was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by old Woodifield. It gave him a feel-

ing of deep, solid satisfaction to be planted there in the midst of it in full view of that frail old figure in the muffler.

"I've had it done up lately," he explained, as he had explained for the past—how many?—weeks. "New carpet," and he pointed to the bright red carpet with a pattern of large white rings. "New furniture," and he nodded towards the massive bookcase and the table with legs like twisted treacle. "Electric heating!" He waved almost exultantly towards the five transparent, pearly sausages glowing so softly in the tilted copper pan.

But he did not draw old Woodifield's attention to the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers' parks with photographers' storm-clouds behind him. It was not new. It had been there for over six years.

"There was something I wanted to tell you," said old Woodifield, and his eyes grew dim remembering. "Now what was it? I had it in my mind when I started out this morning." His hands began to tremble, and patches of red showed above his beard.

Poor old chap, he's on his last pins, thought the boss. And, feeling kindly, he winked at the old man, and said jokingly, "I tell you what. I've got a little drop of something here that'll do you good before you go out into the cold again. It's beautiful stuff. It wouldn't hurt a child." He took a key off his watch-chain, unlocked a cupboard below his desk, and drew forth a dark, squat bottle. "That's the medicine," said he. "And the man from whom I got it told me on the strict Q.T. it came from the cellars at Windsor Castle."

Old Woodifield's mouth fell open at the sight. He couldn't have looked more surprised if the boss had produced a rabbit.

"It's whisky, ain't it?" he piped, feebly.

The boss turned the bottle and lovingly showed him the label. Whisky it was.

"D'you know," said he, peering up at the boss wonderingly, "they won't let me touch it at home." And he looked as though he was going to cry.

"Ah, that's where we know a bit more than the ladies," cried the boss, swooping across for two tumblers that stood on the table with the water-bottle and pouring a generous finger into each. "Drink it down. It'll do you good. And don't put any water with it. It's sacrilege to tamper with stuff like this. Ah!" He tossed off his, pulled out his handkerchief, hastily wiped his moustaches, and cocked an eye at old Woodifield, who was rolling his in his chaps.

The old man swallowed, was silent a moment, and then said faintly, "It's nutty!"

But it warmed him; it crept into his chill old brain—he remembered.

"That was it," he said, heaving himself out of his chair. "I thought you'd like to know. The girls were in Belgium last week having a look at poor Reggie's grave, and they happened to come across your boy's. They're quite near each other, it seems."

Old Woodifield paused, but the boss made no reply. Only a quiver in his eyelids showed that he heard.

"The girls were delighted with the way the place is kept," piped the old voice. "Beautifully looked after. Couldn't be better if they were at home. You've not been across, have yer?"

"No, no!" For various reasons the boss had not been across.

"There's miles of it," quavered old Woodifield, "and it's as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths." It was plain from his voice how much he liked a nice broad path.

The pause came again. Then the old man brightened wonderfully.

"D'you know what the hotel made the girls pay for a pot of jam?" he piped. "Ten francs! Robbery, I call it. It was a little pot, so Gertrude says, no bigger than a half-crown. And she hadn't taken more than a spoonful when they charged her ten francs. Gertrude brought the pot away with her to teach 'em a lesson. Quite right, too; it's trading on our feelings. They think because we're over there having a look around we're ready to pay anything. That's what it is." And he turned towards the door.

"Quite right, quite right!" cried the boss, though what was quite right he hadn't the least idea. He came round by his desk, followed the shuffling footsteps to the door, and saw the old fellow out. Woodifield was gone.

For a long moment the boss stayed, staring at nothing, while the grey-haired office messenger, watching him, dodged in and out of his cubby-hole like a dog that expects to be taken for a run. Then: "I'll see nobody for half an hour, Macey," said the boss. "Understand? Nobody at all."

"Very good, sir."

The door shut, the firm heavy steps recrossed the bright carpet, the fat body plumped down in the spring chair, and leaning forward, the boss covered his face with his hands. He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep. . . .

It had been a terrible shock to him when old Woodifield sprang that remark upon him about the boy's grave. It was exactly as though the earth had opened and he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield's girls staring down at him. For it was strange. Although over six years had passed away, the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep for ever. "My son!" groaned the boss. But no tears came yet. In the past, in the first months and even years after the boy's death, he had only to say those words to be overcome by such grief that nothing short of a violent fit of weeping could relieve him. Time, he had declared then, he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible? His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all those years without the promise

for ever before him of the boy's stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started off together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy's father! No wonder; he had taken to it marvellously. As to his popularity with the staff, every man jack of them down to old Macey couldn't make enough of the boy. And he wasn't in the least spoilt. No, he was just his bright, natural self, with the right word for everybody, with that boyish look and his habit of saying, "Simply splendid!"

But all that was over and done with as though it never had been. The day had come when Macey had handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head. "Deeply regret to inform you . . ." And he had left the office a broken man with his life in ruins.

Six years ago, six years . . . How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday. The boss took his hands from his face; he was puzzled. Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favorite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern-looking. The boy had never looked like that.

At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broad inkpot, and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it onto a piece of blotting-paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing, as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tip of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.

But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that? What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. But then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.

He's a plucky little devil, thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right

spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of . . . But the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, "You artful little b . . ." And he actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on it to help the drying process. All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen into the inkpot.

It was. The last blot fell on the soaked blotting-paper, and the dragged fly lay in it and did not stir. The black legs were stuck to the body; the front legs were not to be seen.

"Come on," said the boss. "Look sharp!" And he stirred it with his pen—in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.

The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket. But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened. He started forward and pressed the bell for Macey.

"Bring me some fresh blotting-paper," he said sternly, "and look sharp about it." And while the old dog padded away he fell to wondering what it was he had been thinking about before. What was it? It was . . . He took out his handkerchief and passed it inside his collar. For the life of him he could not remember.

## A FATHER

*Björnstjerne Björnson (1881)*

THE MAN whose story is here to be told was the wealthiest and most influential person in his parish; his name was Thord Överaas. He appeared in the priest's study one day, tall and earnest.

"I have gotten a son," said he, "and I wish to present him for baptism."

"What shall his name be?"

"Finn—after my father."

"And the sponsors?"

They were mentioned and proved to be the best men and women of Thord's relations in the parish.

"Is there anything else?" inquired the priest, and looked up.

The peasant hesitated a little.

"I should like very much to have him baptized by himself," said he, finally.

"That is to say, on a week-day?"

"Next Saturday, at twelve o'clock noon."

"Is there anything else?" inquired the priest.

"There is nothing else," and the peasant twirled his cap as though he were about to go.

Then the priest rose. "There is yet this, however," said he, and walking toward Thord, he took him by the hand and looked gravely into his eyes: "God grant that the child may become a blessing to you!"

One day sixteen years later, Thord stood once more in the priest's study.

"Really, you carry your age astonishingly well, Thord," said the priest; for he saw no change whatever in the man.

"That is because I have no troubles," replied Thord.

To this the priest said nothing, but after a while he asked: "What is your pleasure this evening?"

"I have come this evening about that son of mine who is to be confirmed to-morrow."

"He is a bright boy."

"I did not wish to pay the priest until I heard what number the boy would have when he takes his place in church to-morrow."

"He will stand number one."

"So I have heard; and here are ten dollars for the priest."

"Is there anything else I can do for you?" inquired the priest, fixing his eyes on Thord.

"There is nothing else."

Thord went out.

Eight years more rolled by, and then one day a noise was heard outside the priest's study, for many men were approaching, and at their head was Thord, who entered first.

The priest looked up and recognized him.

"You come well attended this evening, Thord," said he.

"I am here to request that the banns may be published for my son; he is about to marry Karen Storliden, daughter of Gudmund, who stands here beside me."

"Why, that is the richest girl in the parish."

"So they say," replied the peasant, stroking back his hair with one hand.

The priest sat a while as if in deep thought, then entered the names in his book, without making any comments, and the men wrote their signatures underneath. Thord laid three dollars on the table.

"One is all I am to have," said the priest.

"I know that very well; but he is my only child; I want to do it handsomely."

The priest took the money.

"This is now the third time, Thord, that you have come here on your son's account."

"But now I am through with him," said Thord, and folding up his pocket-book he said farewell and walked away.

The men slowly followed him.

A fortnight later, the father and son were rowing across the lake, one calm, still day, to Storliden to make arrangements for the wedding.

"This thwart is not secure," said the son, and stood up to straighten the seat on which he was sitting.

At the same moment the board he was standing on slipped from under him; he threw out his arms, uttered a shriek, and fell overboard.

"Take hold of the oar!" shouted the father, springing to his feet and holding out the oar.

But when the son had made a couple of efforts he grew stiff.

"Wait a moment!" cried the father, and began to row toward his son. Then the son rolled over on his back, gave his father one long look, and sank.

Thord could scarcely believe it; he held the boat still, and stared at the spot where his son had gone down, as though he must surely come to the surface again. There rose some bubbles, then some more, and finally one large one that burst; and the lake lay there as smooth and bright as a mirror again.

For three days and three nights people saw the father rowing round and round the spot, without taking either food or sleep; he was dragging the lake for the body of his son. And toward morning of the third day he found it, and carried it in his arms up over the hills to his farm.

It might have been about a year from that day when the priest, late one autumn evening, heard some one in the passage outside the door carefully trying to find the latch. The priest opened the door, and in walked a tall, thin man, with bowed form and white hair. The priest looked long at him before he recognized him. It was Thord.

"Are you out walking so late?" said the priest, and stood still in front of him.

"Ah, yes! it is late," said Thord, and took a seat.

The priest sat down also, as though waiting. A long, long silence followed. At last Thord said:

"I have something with me that I should like to give to the poor; I want it to be invested as a legacy in my son's name."

He rose, laid some money on the table, and sat down again. The priest counted it.

"It is a great deal of money," said he.

"It is half the price of my farm. I sold it to-day."

The priest sat long in silence. At last he said, but gently:

"What do you propose to do now, Thord?"

"Something better."

They sat there for a while, Thord with downcast eyes, the priest with his eyes fixed on Thord. Presently the priest said slowly and softly:

"I think your son has at last brought you a true blessing."

"Yes, I think so myself," said Thord, looking up, while two big tears coursed slowly down his cheeks.

## ANOTHER SPRING

*Gladys Schmitt (1945)*

THE students at the drama school said among themselves that Miss Bishop's office had been looking like a funeral parlor ever since the day Barbara McKinnon died. That, like most of their statements, was not entirely accurate. They were young and eager to impress each other; they twisted the fact to accommodate the word; they enjoyed the flourish of the quotable simile. Besides, they were not quite guiltless of a posthumous malice. Certain old jealousies—certain aches and angers that should have been buried along with the fair body which had begotten them—refused to be put underground. The students had been stunned and contrite enough at the funeral. They had carried themselves with the proper hangdog air through the first six or seven days. But they could not be expected to go on grieving forever. They were back to their old ways soon enough, laughing the old laughter among the gaudy Shakespearean costumes in the wardrobe room, talking the old bright talk in the shadowy marble corners, under the blank plaster eyes of Thalia and Melpomene. The atmosphere of order, the atmosphere of a new beginning which always follows a burial, imperceptibly left the place. The ashes of their cigarettes drifted into the plaster fountain; the marble benches were cluttered with the wrappers from their candy bars. The classrooms and offices were invaded by comfortable disorder. All except Miss Bishop's office. That refused to change. Passing its open door on the way out of the building and into the foggy February dusks, the students turned their heads aside. "She remembers too long. It is just like a funeral parlor," they said.

But a disinterested stranger would have disagreed with them, would have found nothing of the mortuary in the tall little room, would have come to the conclusion immediately that he had walked into some sort of shrine. Miss Bishop, who was spare and graying, had already renounced the living flesh and was not one to keep the remembrance of a corpse close to her tempered and chastened heart. If anything of Barbara McKinnon still tarried above the desk lamp that burned solitary in the six o'clock dimness, if any part of her still moved across the speckless carpet or against the panels of polished oak, it was a spirit and an effluence; it had nothing to do with undertakers and burials.

True, the costume which she was to have worn as Cordelia in *King Lear* still lay draped over one of the office chairs—sea-green and breaking into lacy foam at the throat and wrists. But it was harshly empty, and Miss Bishop had kept it there for its very emptiness. It reminded her of her dilemma; it caught her up short whenever she fell into a dream; it admonished her every time she raised her eyes from her desk that there was an urgent piece of casting to be done. The play would, of course, open at the scheduled time; the rest of the cast had paid their tuition and were not dead. It was obvious



that the pale green satin must move into the glow of the footlights among the scarlet and the purple on the appointed night. It was equally obvious that Barbara McKinnon would not carry it forward in the old way, so that it became a floating thing, a rhythmic, shimmering piece of sea. "Well, who, then?" she asked herself twenty times a day. "Who will it be?" But eight days had passed; all the scenes in which Cordelia did not appear had been rehearsed into a state of mechanical lifelessness; every young hopeful on the campus had learned Cordelia's lines by heart; and as yet she had not laid the empty dress across the arms of a successor.

For Barbara McKinnon, there was no successor. Miss Bishop had said as much, and she was one who would know. She had moved across the most celebrated stages in England and America. She had known herself for a Jessica and had never aspired to Portia. She had come away at the first inward sign of disintegration, before the mildew had settled on the roses. In the ten years which she had spent in these academic halls, she had found time to ponder the setting stars and consider the rising ones. Barbara McKinnon had been weighed against the accomplishments of the great and the untarnished promise of the young. Another Barbara McKinnon to fill the sea-green gown? Not in this war-weary generation, not in this time of crassness and blatancy. The wonder was that such a girl should have existed at all.

And now, while she put her handkerchief and her glasses into her purse, it seemed to Miss Bishop that the girl still *did* exist, that she had not been utterly blotted out in noise and fragments of flying windshield on an icy road by night. Miss Bishop closed her eyes and saw the dress borne forward upon the delicate body. The thin hands, alive to the very tips of the fingers, moved upward again in the subtle gesture of resignation. "*What shall Cordelia do?*" said the voice, as clear and many-faceted as a prism. "*Love, and be silent.*" Miss Bishop stiffened against the remembered sound, opened her eyes, walked to the window, and stared at the purpling February evening. So it had been every evening. So, every evening since the event. Miss Bishop had raised up the dead. So, tracing meaningless lines upon the smoggy pane, she had asked herself, "Well, who will take her place?" But there was none to take her place.

She thought for the hundredth time of Helen Miller, who had been from the beginning a weak shadow, a faint echo of the one who was dead. Let it be Helen Miller then, she thought, picking up her purse and turning out the light. And the thought that it would be Helen Miller woke a strange feverishness in her, a certain sour eagerness. If it were Helen Miller, then all of them would see what they had lost. The shadow would make them hunger after the shape; the echo would make them yearn after the voice. Hearing Helen Miller whine those unforgettable lines, they would know the measure of their loss.

"*What shall Cordelia do?*" she said to herself in Helen Miller's voice, locking the office door. "*Love, and be silent,*" she said, stepping into the hall.

The hall was vague and dusky with the accumulated smoke of a day's cigarettes. The reddish light of sunset had invaded it. The place looked vast, unpeopled, forsaken. The marble rang beneath her feet. "*What shall Cordelia do?*" she said again, thinking herself alone. But she was not alone.

Not ten paces away from her, on a marble bench beside the plaster fountain, sat Anna Sekey, with an open book upon her knees. She also had been talking to herself, after the manner of drama students. She had stayed late to inherit the empty hall. It was plain from the shining of her large brown eyes that she had converted the place into a stage, that she had made a spotlight of the slanting ray of sun, that she had filled the shadowy places under the gallery with a crowd of wondering, uplifted faces. Her stocky little body leaned forward. Her blunt hands beat against the book. "*Love,*" she was saying to the ephemeral audience. "*Love, and be silent.*"

Miss Bishop glared. For a full minute it seemed to her that she would not be able to control herself, that her rage would break upon the round brown head. That this squat and awkward Slav, this graceless thing with the squashed face of a lion cub, this square being with a dull mane—that *she* would permit herself, even in an hour of dreaming in an empty hall, to imagine that *she* might be Barbara McKinnon's successor—there were no words to encompass such effrontery.

The girl reddened and shut the book. "Good evening, Miss Bishop," she said.

Somebody—perhaps it had been Mr. Schrieber, who taught diction—had once pointed out that this girl had a remarkable voice. Tawny, he had called it, something between brown and gold. Now in the stillness of the deserted building, Miss Bishop heard the rich ring of it, and felt more affronted than before. Maybe it was because of this voice that she had dared.

Miss Bishop opened and closed the clasp of her pocketbook. "You know, my dear," she said, avoiding Anna's eyes and staring straight at her forehead, "you know, you shouldn't stay in this building so late. It isn't precisely wholesome to sit around dreaming. We permit ourselves all sorts of fantasies when we're alone—things we'd never allow ourselves to dwell upon if we were in company."

The girl took up the book and thrust it into the pocket of her leather jacket. "Yes," she said, "I know."

She said it with a meekness and resignation that turned honest anger into cruelty. Miss Bishop looked uneasily around her. She saw the departure of the dream. The spotlight faded into a mere sick ray of winter sun; the floor was strewn with paper and ashes; the shadow under the gallery was a vast, misted emptiness. The girl was no longer Cordelia, looking with large and ardent eyes upon a kingly father. She was a wretched little Slav, a workman's daughter sent to the city from some outlying mill town. She stood up and buttoned her jacket to her chin.

"Good night," said Miss Bishop.

Long after the big door had swung shut behind her, the tawny voice pursued her, saying, "Good night."

The campus looked strange, islanded with vague spots of melting snow, netted by black boughs of maple trees, changing in the dying light from purple to gray, from gray to rose. There was a sense of movement and transition—the mild ripple of wind, the running of water along the gutters, the tinkle of icicles falling from the neo-classical pediments. Miss Bishop felt and resented the first overtures of spring. It was the dreaming season, the season for the young. Every year in February she had come out into this first soft phase of the night, had lingered along the walk, slow and tender with remembrance, had sensed the sprouts of violets loosening the thawed earth. And each spring had borrowed its particular color and savor from one of the students—some boy with a tart wild-strawberry wit, some girl with crab-apple-blossom cheeks—all the glimmer of April in one voice, a whole May-time preserved for recollection in one windy head of hair. Last year, at this same spot, walking among the silky trunks against the changing sky, Barbara McKinnon had come, with a bunch of violets pinned to her shoulder. . . .

From some far towers at the busy core of the city, into the hushed emptiness of the campus, a clock dropped chimes. Miss Bishop stopped and counted. Seven? Good God, not seven? She pushed back her glove and stared at her watch. A dissolving confusion, a sense of all order dropping away, came upon her with the knowledge that it was seven o'clock. She had meant to dine this evening, as on all other evenings, in the quiet coffee shop on the first floor of her apartment house. She had meant to attend the opening night of a new comedy at the civic playhouse, to stop for a glass of brandy on the way home, to lie down with a book which she had deliberately left at an exciting page, and to read herself to sleep. Now the whole program was thrown out of joint. Before she could reach home and make herself presentable, the coffee shop would be closed. At best, she would be late for the play, and suddenly she found herself doubting that she wanted to see the play at all. She stood quite immobile staring at a trail of coral cloud. Perhaps she did not want her dinner either. She bridled at such a notion, knowing it for the very essence of confusion. Of course she would eat her dinner; she would eat it in the college grill, little as she cared for the place with its endless shuffle of feet and sizzle of eggs and banging of trays. She turned sharply, like a disciplined soldier, at the next fork in the path. The sound of the grill, a clatter and a murmur, floated to her on the moist air. Behind the yellow windows she could see the shadowy and distorted shapes coming and going, carrying trays. She thought of the possible meetings, the necessary talk, and almost turned aside. But there was no help for it, and she opened the door and walked into the smoky, bacon-scented hall.

Once inside the raftered dining room, she wondered how such a small and scattered number of people could make so much noise. The rush hour was over. Its refuse—crumpled napkins, ravaged salads, and a drift of ciga-

rette smoke—had lingered behind it. The few diners were separated by wide reaches of strewn tables and empty chairs. Most of them were students, eating late and alone, bending over books or staring at the ceiling. She ordered an omelet and a cup of coffee at the counter and carried them to a solitary corner. She ate slowly, finding the food tasteless and hard to swallow. After a few bites she pushed the plate aside and fell to staring at the melancholy expanse like the rest. Diagonally across from her, only two tables away, Anna Sekey sat. The girl nodded with politeness and gravity. But her face was disturbing. Her lips were shaking, and there was the raw redness of recent crying around her eyes.

If Miss Bishop had fancied that the wretched scene which had taken place under the plaster stare of the Muses could be forgotten, she saw now that she had been mistaken. The girl had not forgotten it; she had a sickening conviction that the girl would go on remembering it for the rest of her days. The book that lay beside Anna Sekey's untouched supper was plainly not a copy of *King Lear*; it was a history book with pictures of some ancient city on its page. But the unhappy child thought that it might rouse some suspicion; she closed it in jerky haste; she hid it under her leather jacket and bent long over the contents of her pocket, trying to find some inoffensive thing in which she might lose herself. She found a pencil and a crumpled envelope, and began to write with nervous diligence. And suddenly Miss Bishop felt an aching curiosity, a longing to know what the blunt hand was scrawling, a desire to read behind those symbols to their source—the rage, the grief, the penitence, the disillusionment—whatever it was that she, in her own sorrow, had begotten in the young woman's secret heart.

Maybe she is cursing me, Miss Bishop thought, turning back to her tepid food. Maybe she is writing a whole string of Slavic curses. Maybe she . . . But the questioning was brief. Her thoughts drifted to other matters, to the grades for the semester, which must be filed in the dean's office before the week was out; to the ineffectual Lear who *would* splutter the subtlest lines; to Gloucester's costume, which still bulged at the waist; to that other costume, foamy and sea-green, which lay in her office over the chair. . . . She closed her eyes and suddenly the vision which she had avoided by crowding every hour from the hour of the funeral, the vision which she had feared, was upon her now. Blond, cool, and exquisite, Barbara McKinnon moved among the empty tables and the drifting smoke. Her face, flawless and patrician, glowed as it had glowed in the footlights, took on the pale and perfect tints of flowers and shells. Her words rang like shaking prisms against the after-dinner clatter. "*What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.*"

And now it was impossible to hold remembrance back, to keep it behind the opaque wall of duty any more. The wall was broken. The dining room was no longer a dining room, but a stage; and Barbara McKinnon moved and spoke upon it, a living presence reclaimed from death. All the hopes that Miss Bishop had never dared hope for herself, all the skills which only the

humble can teach to the great, all the native grace and all the studied art came back, sweet and incorruptible, out of the grave. That scene in the fourth act—the wild night and the wind in the yellow hair and the long fingers intertwining in anxiety over a father lost. And later, later, the scene in the tent, and the old man waking from his fever dream, waking to find Cordelia above him, under the tawdry lamp. And she making everything authentic and complete, spreading the veil of her royal loveliness over everything, extending her conviction to the foolish boy who must play at being a king, to the muslin that must be silk, to the little glow that must be incandescent, living light. . . . And later, later, in the last scene of all, trailing with the grace of falling water from the old man's arms—that limp young arm, that unbelievable length of hair. . . .

Suddenly the dream was gone, and there was only the reality. She knew dimly that something within the reality, some sound or tension that had not been there before, had destroyed the dream. She looked up, blinking against tears. A presence—and no ordinary presence—had come into the smoky expanse out of the dripping, spring-breathing night. A workman, a thick and stumpy man in a frayed overcoat, stood on the threshold, rubbing his coarse hair and clasping his hat between his elbow and his side. His Slavic face looked flat and pale against a two days' growth of beard. He took a few steps forward. His shoes creaked, and the creaking was loud as the year's first thunder in the uncomfortable hush. "What on earth is *he* doing here?" somebody said.

Then all the eyes in the room withdrew their gaze from the advancing figure and turned in her direction. "Are they looking at me? Is he coming toward me?" she asked herself in confusion that was close to fright. But the stares converged upon another table, settled in cold wonder upon the place where Anna Sekey had been sitting with the crumpled envelope before her and a pencil in her hand. She was rising now, slowly and with dignity. Whatever consternation had come upon her at the sight of the newcomer was mastered and put in its place. She wanted to make plain to him and to all the others that he was welcome. She straightened until her stocky body looked tall. Her hair took on a dulled sheen, a kind of earthy goldenness under the hanging lamp. "Hello, father," she said, so loudly that her tawny voice rang the length and breadth of the room and continued to ring after she was silent, like the suspended, memorable tone of a bell.

They met before Miss Bishop's eyes. Their heads came close to each other in that vague and smoky air where the ghost of Barbara McKinnon had walked only a moment since in a frothy gown. They embraced each other briefly, and Miss Bishop wondered how they could embrace each other at all. She fancied that some heavy smell, a smell of stables or cellars, must cling to the father's worn coat and rumpled hair. There was something thick and oppressive about the place; she would be going.

Yet she could not bring herself to pick up her purse and leave the table.

She had to listen, she could not go. The girl said nothing of any consequence, merely called him "dear," and asked what was the matter, what had brought him all those thirty miles, away from his work, at this time of night. But whatever she said was enriched and warmed and softened in the saying. Her voice lay upon the words like the bloom upon blue grapes. While they talked they sat down on the bench beside the leather jacket. Without taking her eyes from her father's face, Anna Sekey lifted a roll and broke it into small pieces and set the heap of rusks before him on a bread-and-butter plate. It was plain that she had been breaking his rolls for him for a long time, and Miss Bishop found herself wondering why. Then she saw by the helpless movements of his mouth that most of his teeth were gone. He is old and probably foolish, Miss Bishop thought. The thought and the words wherein it clothed itself had a strange familiarity. But she could not remember the source and dismissed the matter and sighed.

The two of them were talking more freely now. The eyes of the other diners, satisfied or contemptuous, had turned back to the ceiling and the books. The father and daughter felt more secure, more alone. With the dogged directness of ordinary people, they had waded quickly through greetings and formalities. He was sorry, he was saying. He was very sorry to come in on her like this, at her school, where he shouldn't come at all. He was sorry to go to the dormitory to ask for her, to ask for her all over the place. He didn't want to bother people, but he couldn't help it. He was in bad trouble. He had to come. The truck got smashed. The truck got smashed this afternoon.

"The truck got smashed?" She sent one wild look from the top of his head to his shoes. It was as if she needed to make certain that he was there, unbruised and unbroken. It was as if she needed to prove to herself that he was not lying on some dark country road.

"Yes. A bakery truck ran into it. It got smashed this afternoon."

"But smashed? All smashed?"

There it was again, Miss Bishop thought, the remarkable voice. Somehow it had managed to endow the smashed truck with the vast proportions of classic tragedy. So a queen, hearing of a great fleet caught upon the reefs, might have said, "Lost? All lost?" So a Roman matron, hearing the tidings of a slaughtered army, might have said, "Dead? All dead?" Her mind scurried about, trying to collect what it knew of Anna Sekey, what it had read concerning her on certain cards and pages of letter paper in the files. Yes, the girl was the daughter of a small-town hauler, she remembered now, And if the poor devil's truck was smashed, then he was smashed. It was a tragedy—a minor, daily sort of tragedy. . . .

What, Miss Bishop thought, is tragedy? And suddenly it seemed to her that everything in the smoke-blurred room had taken on the massy shape and dim coloration of the tragic. The boy who sat friendless by the window, staring at the ceiling—God knows what last frail barricade stood between

him and utter desolation tonight. The waitress who threw the trays on top of each other—who could tell what rage and scorn had put the devil into her water-softened fingertips? And Mr. Schrieber who teaches diction, and Miss Snively who teaches the history of the theatre, and all of us who teach anything here. . . . To be a teacher—that is a tragedy. To spend your life in a remote chapel, with only two doors. Through the one door they come—the young and the beautiful—and they stay only under duress, always thinking how fine it will be when they can escape through the other door. To be forever urging them over the threshold. To say a score of farewells at the end of every June. To love them, and then to be permitted to love them no more. That is significant tragedy, the strong twinge in the heart, the salty sting of tears. But suppose one comes to the tragedy that lies beyond that, the tragedy which has no thesis, the tragedy in which the protagonist dawdles and nobody gives a damn? Suppose I am always as I am tonight, limp and empty as the costume which hangs over my chair? Suppose I never come out of it? Suppose all my Aprils are buried in Barbara McKinnon's grave? Suppose I never know another spring?

By this time the hauler had made it plain to his daughter that their particular tragedy was neither epic nor complete. The truck was not all smashed. It could be mended, the man at the garage had told him so, but, my God, Anna, the cost. . . .

The girl did not ask him about the cost at once. As if she wished to fortify him with some special tenderness against the pain of naming the sum, she lifted some of the rusks and dipped them into the gravy that lay dark on her untouched plate. If she were alone with him now, Miss Bishop thought, she would carry the bread straight to his lips; she would feed him as if he were a bird. Then, for no reason that she could fathom, one of Lear's lines slipped into her mind: "*We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage. . . .*" It was the strange, half-fey, half-holy speech in the last act. The old king, comforting his daughter for defeat and imprisonment and a lost crown, made broken, moonlit music in praise of the life that they would have together safe from the world, behind prison bars:

*" . . . so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh . . .  
And take upon 's the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs and sets of great ones  
That ebb and flow by the moon."*

Barbara McKinnon, she thought, Barbara McKinnon listening to those lines with cool pity, remote and exquisite consideration. . . .

Meanwhile the old man in the threadbare overcoat had brought himself to do it; he had said miserably that he needed two hundred dollars. The mass of the tragedy dwindled; the rock-bound fleets and ghostly armies faded;

she saw nothing now but Barbara McKinnon's listening face. This business at the other table was nothing; it was a matter of two hundred dollars and a couple of poor Polish wretches. She was tired; she had dawdled again; the play at the civic playhouse had begun long ago. Well, she could still go home and read herself to sleep.

And yet, and yet . . . The tawny voice had taken up the question of the two hundred dollars, with ardor, with dignity, as a Roman matron might speak of her husband's honor. He mustn't worry, really, he mustn't worry, even though it looked like a terrible amount of money. There would be some way, darling, there'd have to be some way. It was mid-term now, and she'd paid four hundred dollars in tuition. She'd leave the school and ask them to give her back half of what she'd paid. That's what she'd do. That was the only way. Her blunt brown hands left the rusks and moved toward him. They clasped his wrist, touched his shoulder, patted his cheek. They were thick hands, but they were eloquent. Love flowed in them. Love made them warm and pliable. Love filled and quickened them to the fingertips. And the face, Miss Bishop thought, the flat little squashed-in face. It was translucent. It glowed. His love had breathed upon her face and nourished an inward light, and she was beautiful.

He leaned against the table, pulling his coarse hair in despondency and shaking his head at the offered rusk. God, it was terrible, he said. Mother Mary, it was terrible. All her hopes—everything she'd wanted and planned—all gone because a God damned bakery truck had— He could not finish. He thrust his hard, hairy fists into his eyes, and wept. Old and foolish, Miss Bishop thought, hearing the familiar words again. "*Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish,*" King Lear had said.

The room was utterly quiet and almost empty now. His sob sounded against the stillness and brought the glances of the last diners back upon their heads. The girl saw and did not care. She embraced him, laid her glowing cheek against his two days' growth of beard, patted and soothed him as if he were a crying child. She told him how it would not be terrible at all. They'd be together again—she'd make the coffee the way he liked it, the way her sisters never could make it, the old way in the agate coffee pot. . . .

"But are you sure you can get it back?" he said.

Suppose she couldn't. The earthy terror, the wretch's fear of authority, put out the light behind her face. She turned aside so that he might not see the fear, and her eyes met Miss Bishop's eyes.

"Excuse me, father," she said. "There's my teacher over there. I'll ask her whether I can get it back. She'll know."

She rose then and came slowly toward the table through the air which had been inhabited by the exquisite ghost. Fright had bled all the glory from her. She walked with hunched shoulders and a bent head. But that is all right, Miss Bishop thought. Tomorrow I'll teach her not to walk like that. Tomorrow I'll be saying to her, "For Heaven's sake, child, walk like the



youngest daughter of the King of England. Walk like the Queen of France."

"Pardon me, Miss Bishop," she said, "but I want to know, can a person get back his tuition if he goes away from school in the middle of the year?"

"But you mustn't think of going away from school, Anna."

"But I've got to go. I've got to get the money back."

"But I can't let you go. Really, I can't because——"

Because I love you, she thought. Because I want to hold you in my practiced hands and sift you until there is no earth left in the gold. Because you are the one to fill the empty costume and the empty heart and the empty year. Because before I die and am buried in a little, forgotten grave, I want to hear your voice ring the length and breadth of this country, rich and unforgettable, sounding everlastingly in a thousand men's ears, memorable as the sweet, strong stroke of a bell.

"Because it would be ridiculous, perfectly ridiculous," she said. "If you need the money, there are scholarships, there are funds, I have a little money on hand myself. Tomorrow I can give you a check, so please put it out of your mind, don't give it another thought tonight. Go back and tell your father that you will have a check for him tomorrow morning——"

She wanted to apologize for eavesdropping, but she did not trust herself to say another word. She gathered up her purse and her coat in shaking hands, and turned her back upon the wondering, glowing face, and fled up the long room and through the door.

Outside, the thaw had begun in earnest. Only a few small islands of snow were left. The black earth yielded under her feet. The rivulets ran down the gutters, the icicles fell and tinkled, the street lamps, seen through the mist, were as mellow as the gold peaches of summer. She whispered to herself on the way to the trolley line; her breath went up in little moist clouds; the taste of the spring was on her tongue; on her lips. "Another spring, another child," she said. "Always another child, another spring."

## BOY IN THE SUMMER SUN

*Mark Schorer (1937)*

UNALLOYED, summer had lingered miraculously into late September without a suggestion that autumn was at hand. Leaves and grass were green still, smoke had not yet come into the air, and the lake was calm, almost sapphire blue. Mid-mornings were hot, like mornings in July. So they walked where the woods were thickest, where the air was always slightly damp and the cool of night never quite gone. They did not speak much but went silently along the path, almost shoulder to shoulder, their hands touching, or their arms, as they moved. Now and then the girl spoke, quietly, briefly pointed out a bird, a flower, once a green snake gliding through the grass, and the

boy answered with a nod or a monosyllable, his face touched with abstraction and a slight worry. After they came to a place in the wood where they stretched out now with their arms about each other lightly as if the place and this gesture were habitual, they did not speak at all until at last the girl, Rachel, asked suddenly, "Why are you so quiet? Is it Max? Are you angry because he's coming, Will?"

The boy started and looked into her face. "Angry? No, I'm not angry . . . I was just thinking about that lousy job. When I'm out here it's hard to believe that a job like that can be waiting for me when I get back. It's foul."

The girl looked away into the depth of the wood. "Is it, Will?" she asked. "Or is it just that four years of school pretty well spoiled us for anything else? That we never learn there that for most people life finally comes down to work?"

"Maybe that's it."

"Or is it foul, Will? Is it worse than most jobs in the city, in summer?"

"Maybe not. But it's still foul."

They were quiet again, and it seemed a long time later, to him, when Rachel said, "Anyway, I'm glad it isn't Max."

His arms tightened around her shoulders. Then he sat up, his eyes narrowed in the shade, and he asked, "Why should it be?"

She said, "It shouldn't."

He lay down beside her again. He stared up into the lacework of green leaves arched above them, and at the rare patches of blue sky that the leaves did not cover. Why should it be Max? Or why should she think it might be?

He had been awakened that morning by the ringing telephone, and lay sleepily in bed listening to Rachel's voice talking to someone in a way that did disturb him vaguely then, although now it seemed only mildly irritating that this week end should be intruded upon. "But, darling!" her voice had cried over the telephone. "What are you doing here? Come over at once! Mind? Of course not! We'll love it! In two hours? Good!"

When he came to breakfast, she smiled brightly and cried, "Guess who's coming, Will! Max Garey! He got bored and started out early this morning, and just now called from the village. Isn't it grand? Mother's so fond of him—she'll take care of him."

"Does your mother know him? I didn't know she did."

"Oh, yes, that last week at school, when she came to help me pack, you know . . ."

"No, I didn't," he said. And now he wondered why she had not told him.

Then Mrs. Harley came out on the porch. "Good morning, Will," she said brightly as she patted her white hair. "Isn't it *nice* that Mr. Garey can come! I'm so fond of Mr. Garey!"

"Yes, isn't it?" Will said into his coffee, and looked across the table into Rachel's eyes, which were shining with pleasure and were quite heedless of the question in his.

"Did you have any work with Mr. Garey, Will? Rachel thought him such a splendid teacher."

"No, I didn't," Will said. "His classes were always filled with girls."

Rachel looked at him quickly. "Now you're being unfair, Will. He's not one of those. Everybody thinks he's a good teacher."

"I'm sorry," he said, and felt suddenly sad, lonely in the bright morning with Rachel only across the table from him.

He felt that loneliness again now. "Maybe it is more than the job," he said. "Everything's different since June. I don't know why."

"What do you mean, Will?"

"Just that feeling that everything's breaking up, smashing."

They were quiet then until Rachel said, "I know. I'm different, too. Something's changed in me. There's something sad, some ache. . . ."

Will knew that something had changed in her. She was older than she had been in June. There was something about her now that bewildered him, the feeling that she lived without him, an aloofness, a self-sufficiency which was new. She was like a woman, sometimes, putting up with a boy. He had felt it almost every week end, and this and the more general sadness of the summer had darkened otherwise golden hours. And yet there was that in her kisses still, in her sweet arms around him, in her yielding body that belied his feeling. And, with him, there still came from her throat a little moan of pain and passion which he knew no one else had ever heard. And yet, now in the deep cool wood as she lay in his arms, he felt that she had forgotten him beside her.

She spoke at last as with an effort, as if recalling herself from a dream. "You know, Will, after you left school, in that week I stayed on, I saw Max rather often. Then mother met him. She invited him to come up. He was here earlier in the summer. Didn't I tell you?"

"No," he said, his throat contracting. "You must have forgotten."

His sadness knotted in his throat suddenly, intensely, and he remembered then very clearly, almost as if she were saying it again now, something she had said before he left her in June. "Sometimes I wonder if this can last, Will, if it mustn't end. It's been almost too lovely, too complete. We've *realized* each other. We know each other as I think people almost never do. Now it begins to seem a little unreal, perhaps because it's been too lovely, part of this unreal life we're leaving. I wonder if that sometimes happens, Will."

Then he had laughed; but now, as he remembered, his arms tightened around her suddenly, as if from fright, and he leaned down and kissed her. Her lips were quiet, without response. He opened his eyes then to look at her and saw that her eyes were fixed on some remote object in the arch of trees or beyond, some dream, something far from him. He stood up and moved away. "Let's go back," he said, and without waiting for her started quickly up the path, toward the house.

All the afternoon they lay on the raft, Rachel between them. Max talked,

his voice reflective and lazy, mixing with the sun of that afternoon and the endless laziness in the sounds that insects made in the woods and in the long grass along the shore, his voice spinning itself out, pausing now and then to listen to itself, and going on again, with Rachel lying quiet between them, her eyes closed and the oil gleaming on her brown skin. Will's head was turned toward her, his eyes wandering back and forth from her parted lips and her gleaming lashes to the swell of her breasts under her white swimming suit, to her long browned legs and her crossed feet at the end of the raft.

All the time Max's voice went on, the lazy, professor's voice. Will could tell as he heard it that it was a voice that always talked and that always had listeners, and yet, now, it did not irritate him. He was almost content to lie in the sun with the sensation of burning on his skin, and a soft warm glow of skin absorbing bright sun enough in the afternoon to allay for the moment the morning's inarticulate fears, even though it was Max who was lying stretched out beyond Rachel, who was talking, pausing, talking, sometimes falling silent and no word coming from Rachel or himself, and then starting up again, the voice spinning itself out softly in the afternoon sun, with all the laziness of the afternoon in his slow words.

"... and so in Donne the central factor is death . . . death, of course . . . he, more than any of the poets, built what he wrote upon what may be called a metaphysic of death . . . death as the great leveller on the one hand, the great destroyer of everything, beauty, love . . . and death as the figure at the gate of Heaven . . . these two, this one . . . the central factor, always present . . ."

His voice was slow, modulated, a little affected, quite soft, and in it, Will knew as he looked at Rachel's face, there was some magic, a magic of wisdom and experience that enthralled her.

Rachel's voice began, slow and soft as if infected by Max's voice, as warm as the sun, and speaking lines that Max doubtless first spoke to her, perhaps—only perhaps—in the classroom:

*"When I dyed last, and, Deare, I dye  
As often as from thee I goe,  
Though it be but an houre agoe,  
And Lovers' houres be full eternity,  
I can remember yet that I  
Something did say, and something did bestow . . ."*

Max laughed. "But, darling," he said, "that's still another kind of death, not so serious."

Rachel said nothing. And the sun wove around them its bright and golden web, and the whole world then as they lay there had slipped away and left the three of them stranded together in an unreality of sunlight on burning skin and closed eyelids, and nothing more. And Will, too, felt out of the world of fact, was empty of feeling, as if pure sensation had replaced it. And

only slowly did a faint jangling come into his mind, the jangle of Max's word *darling*, like something shaken in a metal box, some harsh sound, or a feeling perhaps, shaking him abruptly from the web. He stirred. He turned. And in turning the web was broken, and he was free of it again, his hand plunged in the cold blue water of the lake and left to dangle there, his eyes turned from Rachel and Max for the moment but seeing nothing in the indeterminable depths of the blue water that gently lapped his hand.

"Not nearly so serious," Max said. "Only a metaphor, a way of speaking . . ."

Will turned toward them again, and now he saw in Rachel's face how serious it was, for she looked suddenly ill for all the glow of her skin, her face turned away from him and her lips fallen apart, and every line in her face and body taut suddenly, yearning, aching suddenly with sharp longing, sharp pain, she quite sick for love. Will's hands closed at his sides and opened again, turned empty to the sun.

"Poetry is full of such conventions, formalized short cuts to express familiar sentiments," Max was saying. "In Donne, of course, there's enough fire, usually, to vitalize them, but in others . . . mere metaphors . . ."

Something in Will's mind snapped, then seemed to shout, *Who cares? For God's sake, who cares?* He was enraged beyond endurance by the man's pompous classroom manner, his easy presence, his way of excluding Will, as if he were alone with Rachel and no one else existed. He hated him, and the very presence of Rachel there made his throat ache with something like the pressure of tears coming. The sun had lost its spell. The buzz of insects on the shore seemed for a moment unbearably loud, and the sun no longer warm, but hot, searing, parching his throat and mouth, blinding him. For now he hated Max, and he knew, as he remembered Rachel's voice speaking those lines, that she was lost to him, that he had nothing more for her, that Max had all. And there Max lay, as if he belonged there, had every right to be there, talking and priding himself in his talk, delighting to hear his own words, lecturing there as though he were in the classroom and Rachel in the front row looking up at him with wide eyes, lecturing as though Rachel and he were alone in the room, and he, Will, did not exist.

Will's eyes clouded in anger as he stared down into the water disturbed by his hand. He tried not to hear what their low voices said, and only when they were silent did he turn suddenly on the raft again to see how their bodies had moved together, so that their legs touched, and Max's hand lay quite near Rachel's hair. He stood up abruptly, stirring the raft in the water, and then dived deep, swam quickly out and away from them, his arms beating the water in his anger, in a frantic effort to forget the hurt which came from Rachel's willing reception of the man's intolerable arrogance.

He struck out into the lake. The water was cold on his skin, and as he swam, his anger cooled. But when his anger was gone, he felt sad and futile again, swam more slowly, felt helpless and wounded, felt almost weak in the

water, so that he grew angry with himself instead and wished that he could hold that other anger. When he turned back and swam slowly toward the shore, only the hurt remained, and he did not go to the raft. There Max's words would still be spinning themselves out in the sunlight, catching Rachel's mind in their spell, catching her heart firmly and her whole mind and life, and holding them there, as if the words were really magic.

He walked up the beach and stretched out on the sand. He lay on his back and looked up into the blue sky, and as he lay there he felt suddenly that this was the last time in his life that he would be doing quite this. All summer he had been coming from the sweltering, grimy city, and in seeing Rachel in the country, in living in her mother's friendly house, in swimming and dancing and drinking and finding cool spots in the woods where the moss was thick and only the trees and birds made sound—in all of this it had seemed that nothing had changed or was ending. And this in spite of the fact that when they parted in June, when they walked for the last time along familiar walks between familiar buildings, they had vaguely felt that an end had come to a period, that a new life was waiting for both of them, and that (Rachel felt) somehow they were therefore ending for one another. But then Max was nothing to him, only a professor whom she liked; so for him nothing really ended.

Now the golden day was unbearable. He turned over on his stomach and put his face in his arms. Almost at once he could feel the sun burning his neck, his back. But it alleviated nothing. There was the dull ache in his chest and throat, the constant feeling that at any moment he would cry out like a child in sobs. It was a pressure in his body that he could not put into thoughts, only the feeling that something was ending, inevitably ending. He thought of his past and it was all gold, all brightness and gold, all magic landscape, all love, all an idyl, all a bright day, and all ending.

He thought he must cry. All his youth was gathered into a knot of pain that choked him, a youth that had been like gold but that pressed against his heart now, dull and heavy. He thought of going back to the city, to the hot office, to the dull and stupid work, sweating over accounts, of the years he had ahead of him in which to slave there. And he knew as he lay in the sand, really *knew*, for the first time, that all of that was no mere interlude, that golden days must end, gold vanish.

He felt a touch on his shoulder, turned, and looked up. It was Rachel, brown in the sun, saying, "Darling, don't be rude."

He sat up. "Am I being rude?"

"Does he bore you?"

"Yes. I don't like him much."

"Well, I'm sorry he came, Will, but I couldn't help it. Come back and try to bear him. He's not bad, you know."

"No?" Will asked as he got up.

She looked at him swiftly, then smiled. "Don't be silly, darling."

"No, *darling*."

"Good."

Then they went up the shore, back to the raft where Max still lay in the lessening glare of the sun.

Then finally he could put up with him no longer. The whole thing, suddenly, was impossible, too foul, too much for him. He sat at the table for a minute more and fought against the impulse to leave. But Mrs. Harley, cooing in a voice that almost made him ill ("But how *interesting*, Mr. Garey. *Do go on!* Do you *really* believe that?") and Max, toying with his fork and smiling with what Will supposed was great "charm" before continuing his monologue, decided him. He looked quickly at Rachel. She sat at the end of the table, opposite her mother. She looked very cool in a white dress, brown throat and arms cool and lovely, her lips slightly parted, her eyes fixed—lost to him.

Then he rose quickly to his feet. "Excuse me, please," he said, and went quickly to the porch, and then outside, down the steps, stumbled down toward the shore under the pines. He sat down in the grass. His fingers fumbled for a cigarette and a match in his pocket. Then he stared out at the water and the new moon hanging close over the opposite shore. In the reeds the frogs sang. From above came the ring of silver on china. He bit hard into his lower lip when he knew suddenly that the salt he tasted was of tears.

Then everything broke, collapsed in him like a sail when the wind dies. He wept as he had not wept since he was a small boy; and there, for a time in the night, he felt that he was a small boy still, alone in the dark and lonely night. He lay on the grass and sobbed, and there was a violence in his weeping as of a body tortured. He smothered the sound in the grass.

But he could not smother the pain in his chest. It was like a live thing in his heart, heavy and pressing, torturing, not relieved by sobs. It came over him in waves of torment, and now it was no longer anything of the mind, but of the body alone, a physical pressure, racking and violent, eruptive and convulsive, as if his very life, well-loved, were ending in the torment.

He did not feel Rachel's hand on his shoulder. It was her voice that recalled him: "Will—darling—please!"

Even then he could not prevent his sobs from coming. It was as if they were something separate from him, separate from his will, as if they had their own life, must come to their own slow end. He felt no shame before her, had no feelings at all, no thoughts, was given over entirely to what seemed wholly a physical act. Then slowly, at last, his shoulders grew quieter. Slowly his breathing quieted. Slowly his eyes dried. And it was over at last. He felt empty, weak, desolate as he turned slowly over on his back to look at her.

The moon was almost in the water. He could see it, touching the opposite shore. The sky was dark, sprinkled with cold stars. These too he saw, blurred and faint, unsteady in the darkness. Beside him knelt Rachel, her white dress a vague lightness, her face above him a vague blur. She spoke again: "Darling, what is it, what's *wrong*?"

He swallowed hard but could not speak. He lay on his back and looked at

the blur of her face. His hand reached out and seized hers, held it tightly. Then she lay down beside him suddenly, put her arms around him, and her cheek to his mouth. He sensed the familiar perfume of her hair and moved away from her a little. Now he could see the stars more clearly; their light was brighter, harder, they were steadier in the sky, fixed and remote. Then, although Rachel's arms were around him and her face so close that he could feel her warm breath sweet on his face, he was alone, desolate, empty, alone on the shore under the stars. He did not say this then, nor did he even quite feel it, but he knew it, his body, empty and quiet, knew it—the cold loneliness of the stars even on a summer night. He lay still and looked up. He knew that something momentous had happened, something momentous changed.

"I felt sick," he said at last, though Rachel had not spoken again.

She said nothing for a while, then whispered, "I'm sorry."

"It's all right now."

As if startled by the deadly quiet of his voice, she sat up and looked closely into his face. "Are you all right now, Will?"

"Yes, it's all right now." He said it clearly, calmly, his eyes on the distant stars.

"What was it, though?" she asked.

"You know."

"No."

"Yes, you do."

"Not *Max*, Will?"

"What else?"

"Oh, but *darling*—"

"It doesn't matter, Rachel."

"What do you mean—doesn't matter? Do you think—?"

"I know, Rachel. I knew it this morning. But only tonight, suddenly, at the table, when I saw your face while he was talking—it took that long until I really could believe it. But it doesn't matter now."

"You think I love him?"

"You do love him."

Then she did not answer.

"Yesterday I wouldn't have believed that things like this happen. For over a year . . ." He paused. Then, "Nothing will ever be the same again—love, or anything."

"Please, Will. Nothing's happened."

"Everything's happened. Now it's over."

She looked at him closely. Then she said, "I've never heard you talk like that. You're different. Your voice—it's . . ."

"What?"

"You're different. Your voice frightens me. It's so quiet and cold and far away, so different—" She spoke jerkily. "So dead!"



He sat up, leaned back on his elbows. The moon was gone, sunk under the water. The sky was darker, and the stars seemed brighter still, separate, and farther away. Then he lay down again and she beside him. They were both very quiet. Finally she said, "Do you hate me?"

He turned to her. "No," he answered. He watched her face. He saw her eyes sparkling with tears. He said, "What are you crying for?"

"I can't tell you why, I can't say, I don't know. I'm afraid. I do love you, Will. Only now I'm afraid, because I do love someone else—more. I don't want to. But I do. It frightens me!"

Now she was no longer older than he. She was a girl again, her woman's poise, given her briefly by this new love, taken from her again by that same love because, in the face of it, she was afraid. She was afraid of its swiftness, of what it might hold, of her own heart, turning. Now he felt older than she, felt that he could tell her something. He said, "I know what it is. It isn't just that we've been in love. We've had such a swell time. I don't know if I can say this, but it's something like this anyway—you weren't just yourself for me, and I wasn't just myself for you. We were both in love with much more than each other. You were all of that life for me, and maybe I was that for you, too. We were that whole life for each other, and we didn't want to lose it, but we couldn't help ourselves, couldn't keep it any longer."

She was crying. She put her face on his shoulder and he felt her tears on his neck. Then he put his arms around her and held her close. But he felt no less alone. And he thought then that this aloneness would never entirely leave him again, but that when he got back to the city next day, after he had been there a while, working in the office, after a week or two or perhaps a whole year, finally anyway, it would have left him somewhat less empty, less deadly calm. Then this day and this summer and all the golden days would have become the dream; and the other life would be real.

"How did your poem go, Rachel? 'When I last died, and, dear, I die whenever you go from me . . .'"

"Please—don't," she said.

He began to stroke her hair. She was quiet now, no longer crying, held close in his arms. He said, "Maybe it's always like this. Maybe the end of every love is a kind of little death, when you have to put behind more than just the love itself, but all the life, too, in which the love was wrapped. Maybe that's what living is—a lot of little dyings. I don't know—I can't say it very well. Maybe I don't even know."

For a moment more they sat together and then she said, "We have to go back. They'll wonder . . ."

"All right," he said

Then, clinging together, helping each other up the slope, they went up to the house, where the lights were, and the sounds of voices, clinging together like children still, under the stars.

## THE CHRYSANTHEMUMS

*John Steinbeck (1938)*

THE HIGH gray-flannel fog of winter closed the Salinas Valley from the sky and from the rest of the world. On every side it sat like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley a closed pot. On the broad, level land floor the gang plows bit deep and left the black earth shining like metal where the shares had cut. On the foot-hill ranches across the Salinas River the yellow stubble fields seemed to be bathed in pale cold sunshine; but there was no sunshine in the valley now in December. The thick willow scrub along the river flamed with sharp and positive yellow leaves.

It was a time of quiet and of waiting. The air was cold and tender. A light wind blew up from the southwest so that the farmers were mildly hopeful of a good rain before long; but fog and rain do not go together.

Across the river, on Henry Allen's foot-hill ranch there was little work to be done, for the hay was cut and stored and the orchards were plowed up to receive the rain deeply when it should come. The cattle on the higher slopes were becoming shaggy and rough-coated.

Elisa Allen, working in her flower garden, looked down across the yard and saw Henry, her husband, talking to two men in business suits. The three of them stood by the tractor shed, each man with one foot on the side of the Little Fordson. They smoked cigarettes and studied the machine as they talked.

Elisa watched them for a moment and then went back to her work. She was thirty-five. Her face was lean and strong and her eyes were as clear as water. Her figure looked blocked and heavy in her gardening costume, a man's black hat pulled low down over her eyes, clodhopper shoes, a figured print dress almost completely covered by a big corduroy apron with four big pockets to hold the snips, the trowel and scratcher, the seeds and the knife she worked with. She wore heavy leather gloves to protect her hands while she worked.

She was cutting down the old year's chrysanthemum stalks with a pair of short and powerful scissors. She looked down toward the men by the tractor shed now and then. Her face was eager and mature and handsome; even her work with the scissors was over-eager, over-powerful. The chrysanthemum stems seemed too small and easy for her energy.

She brushed a cloud of hair out of her eyes with the back of her glove, and left a smudge of earth on her cheek in doing it. Behind her stood the neat white farmhouse with red geraniums close-banked round it as high as the windows. It was a hard-swept-looking little house, with hard-polished windows and a clean mat on the front steps.

Elisa cast another glance toward the tractor shed. The stranger men were

getting into their Ford Coupé. She took off a glove and put her strong fingers down into the forest of new green chrysanthemum sprouts that were growing round the old roots. She spread the leaves and looked down among the close-growing stems. No aphids were there, no sow bugs nor snails nor cut worms. Her terrier fingers destroyed such pests before they could get started.

Elisa started at the sound of her husband's voice. He had come near quietly and he leaned over the wire fence that protected her flower garden from cattle and dogs and chickens.

"At it again," he said. "You've got a strong new crop coming."

Elisa straightened her back and pulled on the gardening glove again. "Yes. They'll be strong this coming year." In her tone and on her face there was a little smugness.

"You've got a gift with things," Henry observed. "Some of those yellow chrysanthemums you had last year were ten inches across. I wish you'd work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big."

Her eyes sharpened. "Maybe I could do it too. I've a gift with things all right. My mother had it. She could stick anything in the ground and make it grow. She said it was having planter's hands that knew how to do it."

"Well, it sure works with flowers," he said.

"Henry, who were those men you were talking to?"

"Why, sure, that's what I came to tell you. They were from the Western Meat Company. I sold those thirty head of three-year-old steers. Got nearly my own price too."

"Good," she said. "Good for you."

"And I thought," he continued, "I thought how it's Saturday afternoon, and we might go into Salinas for dinner at a restaurant and then to a picture show—to celebrate, you see."

"Good," she repeated. "Oh, yes. That will be good."

Henry put on his joking tone. "There's fights to-night. How'd you like to go to the fights?"

"Oh, no," she said breathlessly. "No, I wouldn't like fights."

"Just fooling, Elisa. We'll go to a movie. Let's see. It's two now. I'm going to take Scotty and bring down those steers from the hill. It'll take us maybe two hours. We'll go in town about five and have dinner at the Cominos Hotel. Like that?"

"Of course I'll like it. It's good to eat away from home."

"All right then. I'll go get up a couple of horses."

She said, "I'll have plenty of time to transplant some of these sets, I guess."

She heard her husband calling Scotty down by the barn. And a little later she saw the two men ride up the pale-yellow hillside in search of the steers.

There was a little square sandy bed kept for rooting the chrysanthemums. With her trowel she turned the soil over and over and smoothed it and patted it firm. Then she dug ten parallel trenches to receive the sets. Back at the

chrysanthemum bed she pulled out the little crisp shoots, trimmed off the leaves of each one with her scissors, and laid it on a small orderly pile.

A squeak of wheels and plod of hoofs came from the road. Elisa looked up. The country road ran along the dense bank of willows and cottonwoods that bordered the river, and up this road came a curious vehicle, curiously drawn. It was an old spring-wagon, with a round canvas top on it like the cover of a prairie schooner. It was drawn by an old bay horse and a little gray-and-white burro. A big stubble-bearded man sat between the cover flaps and drove the crawling team. Underneath the wagon, between the hind wheels, a lean and rangy mongrel dog walked sedately. Words were painted on the canvas in clumsy, crooked letters: "Pots, pans, knives, scissors, lawn mowers, Fixed." Two rows of articles, and the triumphantly definitive "Fixed" below. The black paint had run down in little sharp points beneath each letter.

Elisa, squatting on the ground, watched to see the crazy loose-jointed wagon pass by. But it didn't pass. It turned into the farm road in front of her house, crooked old wheels skirling and squeaking. The rangy dog darted from beneath the wheels and ran ahead. Instantly the two ranch shepherds flew out at him. Then all three stopped, and with stiff and quivering tails, with taut straight legs, with ambassadorial dignity, they slowly circled, sniffing daintily. The caravan pulled up to Elisa's wire fence and stopped. Now the newcomer dog, feeling outnumbered, lowered his tail and retired under the wagon with raised hackles and bared teeth.

The man on the wagon seat called out, "That's a bad dog in a fight when he gets started."

Elisa laughed. "I see he is. How soon does he generally get started?"

The man caught up her laughter and echoed it heartily. "Sometimes not for weeks and weeks," he said. He climbed stiffly down over the wheel. The horse and the donkey dropped like unwatered flowers.

Elisa saw that he was a very big man. Although his hair and beard were graying, he did not look old. His worn black suit was wrinkled and spotted with grease. The laughter had disappeared from his face and eyes the moment his laughing voice ceased. His eyes were dark and they were full of the brooding that gets in the eyes of teamsters and of sailors. The calloused hands he rested on the fence were cracked, and every crack was a black line. He took off his battered hat.

"I'm off my general road, ma'am," he said. "Does this dirt road cut over across the river to the Los Angeles highway?"

Elisa stood up and shoved the thick scissors in her apron pocket. "Well, yes, it does, but it winds around and then fords the river. I don't think your team could pull through the sand."

He replied with some asperity, "It might surprise you what them beasts can pull through."

"When they get started?" she asked.

He smiled for a second. "Yes. When they get started."

"Well," said Elisa, "I think you'll save time if you go back to the Salinas road and pick up the highway there."

He drew a big finger down the chicken wire and made it sing. "I ain't in any hurry, ma'am. I go from Seattle to San Diego and back every year. Takes all my time. About six months each way. I aim to follow nice weather."

Elisa took off her gloves and stuffed them in the apron pocket with the scissors. She touched the under edge of her man's hat, searching for fugitive hairs. "That sounds like a nice kind of a way to live," she said.

He leaned confidentially over the fence. "Maybe you noticed the writing on my wagon. I mend pots and sharpen knives and scissors. You got any of them things to do?"

"Oh, no," she said quickly. "Nothing like that." Her eyes hardened with resistance.

"Scissors is the worst thing," he explained. "Most people just ruin scissors trying to sharpen 'em, but I know how. I got a special tool. It's a little bobbit kind of thing and patented. But it sure does the trick."

"No. My scissors are all sharp."

"All right then. Take a pot," he continued earnestly, "a bent pot or a pot with a hole. I can make it like new so you don't have to buy no new ones. That's a saving for you."

"No," she said shortly. "I tell you I have nothing like that for you to do."

His face fell to an exaggerated sadness. His voice took on a whining undertone. "I ain't had a thing to do to-day. Maybe I won't have no supper to-night. You see I'm off my regular road. I know folks on the highway clear from Seattle to San Diego. They save their things for me to sharpen up because they know I do it so good and save them money."

"I'm sorry," Elisa said irritably. "I haven't anything for you to do."

His eyes left her face and fell to searching the ground. They roamed about until they came to the chrysanthemum bed where she had been working. "What's them plants, ma'am?"

The irritation and resistance melted from Elisa's face. "Oh, those are chrysanthemums, giant whites and yellows. I raise them every year, bigger than anybody around here."

"Kind of a long-stemmed flower? Looks like a quick puff of colored smoke?" he asked.

"That's it. What a nice way to describe them!"

"They smell kind of nasty till you get used to them," he said.

"It's a good bitter smell," she retorted, "not nasty at all."

He changed his tone quickly. "I like the smell myself."

"I had ten-inch blooms this year," she said.

The man leaned farther over the fence. "Look. I know a lady down the road a piece has got the nicest garden you ever seen. Got nearly every kind

of flower but no chrysanthemums. Last time I was mending a copper-bottom wash tub for her (that's a hard job but I do it good), she said to me, "If you ever run across some nice chrysanthemums, I wish you'd try to get me a few seeds." That's what she told me."

Elisa's eyes grew alert and eager. "She couldn't have known much about chrysanthemums. You *can* raise them from seed, but it's much easier to root the little sprouts you see there."

"Oh," he said. "I s'pose I can't take none to her then."

"Why yes, you can," Elisa cried. "I can put some in damp sand, and you can carry them right along with you. They'll take root in the pot if you keep them damp. And then she can transplant them."

"She'd sure like to have some, ma'am. You say they're nice ones?"

"Beautiful," she said. "Oh, beautiful!" Her eyes shone. She tore off the battered hat and shook out her dark pretty hair. "I'll put them in a flower pot, and you can take them right with you. Come into the yard."

While the man came through the picket gate Elisa ran excitedly along the geranium-bordered path to the back of the house. And she returned carrying a big red flower pot. The gloves were forgotten now. She knelt on the ground by the starting bed and dug up the sandy soil with her fingers and scooped it into the bright new flower pot. Then she picked up the little pile of shoots she had prepared. With her strong fingers she pressed them into the sand and tamped round them with her knuckles. The man stood over her. "I'll tell you what to do," she said. "You remember so you can tell the lady."

"Yes, I'll try to remember."

"Well, look. These will take root in about a month. Then she must set them out, about a foot apart in good rich earth like this, see? She lifted a handful of dark soil for him to look at. "They'll grow fast and tall. Now remember this. In July tell her to cut them down, about eight inches from the ground."

"Before they bloom?" he asked.

"Yes, before they bloom." Her face was tight with eagerness. "They'll grow right up again. About the last of September the buds will start."

She stopped and seemed perplexed. "It's the budding that takes the most care," she said hesitantly. "I don't know how to tell you." She looked deep into his eyes searchingly. Her mouth opened a little, and she seemed to be listening. "I'll try to tell you," she said. "Did you ever hear of planting hands?"

"Can't say I have, ma'am."

"Well, I can only tell you what it feels like. It's when you're picking off the buds you don't want. Everything goes right down into your fingertips. You watch your fingers work. They do it themselves. You can feel how it is. They pick and pick the buds. They never make a mistake. They're with the plant. Do you see? Your fingers and the plant. You can feel that, right up

your arm. They know. They never make a mistake. You can feel it. When you're like that you can't do anything wrong. Do you see that? Can you understand that?"

She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately.

The man's eyes narrowed. He looked away self-consciously. "Maybe I know," he said. "Sometimes in the night in the wagon there—"

Elisa's voice grew husky. She broke in on him. "I've never lived as you do, but I know what you mean. When the night is dark—the stars are sharp-pointed, and there's quiet. Why, you rise up and up!"

Kneeling there, her hand went out toward his legs in the greasy black trousers. Her hesitant fingers almost touched the cloth. Then her hand dropped to the ground.

He said, "It's nice, just like you say. Only when you don't have no dinner it ain't."

She stood up then, very straight, and her face was ashamed. She held the flower pot out to him and placed it gently in his arms. "Here. Put it in your wagon, on the seat, where you can watch it. Maybe I can find something for you to do."

At the back of the house she dug in the can pile and found two old and battered aluminum sauce pans. She carried them back and gave them to him. "Here, maybe you can fix these."

His manner changed. He became professional. "Good as new I can fix them." At the back of his wagon he set a little anvil, and out of an oily tool box dug a small machine hammer. Elisa came through the gate to watch him while he pounded out the dents in the kettles. His mouth grew sure and knowing. At a difficult part of the work he sucked his under-lip.

"You sleep right in the wagon?" Elisa asked.

"Right in the wagon, ma'am. Rain or shine I'm dry as a cow in there."

"It must be nice," she said. "It must be very nice. I wish women could do such things."

"It ain't the right kind of a life for a woman."

Her upper lip raised a little, showing her teeth. "How do you know? How can you tell?" she said.

"I don't know, ma'am," he protested. "Of course I don't know. Now here's your kettles, done. You don't have to buy no new ones."

"How much?"

"Oh, fifty cents'll do. I keep my prices down and my work good. That's why I have all them satisfied customers up and down the highway."

Elisa brought him a fifty-cent piece from the house and dropped it in his hand. "You might be surprised to have a rival sometime. I can sharpen scissors too. And I can beat the dents out of little pots. I could show you what a woman might do."

He put his hammer back in the oily box and shoved the little anvil out of

sight. "It would be a lonely life for a woman, ma'am, and a scary life, too, with animals creeping under the wagon all night." He climbed over the singletree, steadying himself with a hand on the burro's white rump. He settled himself in the seat, picked up the lines. "Thank you kindly, ma'am," he said. "I'll do like you told me; I'll go back and catch the Salinas road."

"Mind," she called, "if you're long in getting there, keep the sand damp."

"Sand, ma'am— Sand? Oh, sure. You mean around the chrysanthemums. Sure I will." He clucked his tongue. The beasts leaned luxuriously into their collars. The mongrel dog took his place between the back wheels. The wagon turned and crawled out the entrance road and back the way it had come, along the river.

Elisa stood in front of her wire fence watching the slow progress of the caravan. Her shoulders were straight, her head thrown back, her eyes half-closed, so that the scene came vaguely into them. Her lips moved silently, forming the words "Good-by—good-by." Then she whispered, "That's a bright direction. There's a glowing there." The sound of her whisper startled her. She shook herself free and looked about to see whether anyone had been listening. Only the dogs had heard. They lifted their heads toward her from their sleeping in the dust, and then stretched out their chins and settled asleep again. Elisa turned and ran hurriedly into the house.

In the kitchen she reached behind the stove and felt the water tank. It was full of hot water from the noonday cooking. In the bathroom she tore off her soiled clothes and flung them into the corner. And then she scrubbed herself with a little block of pumice, legs and thighs, loins and chest and arms, until her skin was scratched and red. When she had dried herself she stood in front of a mirror in her bedroom and looked at her body. She tightened her stomach and threw out her chest. She turned and looked over her shoulder at her back.

After a while she began to dress slowly. She put on her newest under-clothing and her nicest stockings and the dress which was the symbol of her prettiness. She worked carefully on her hair, pencilled her eyebrows, and rouged her lips.

Before she was finished she heard the little thunder of hoofs and the shouts of Henry and his helper as they drove the red steers into the corral. She heard the gate bang shut and set herself for Henry's arrival.

His step sounded on the porch. He entered the house calling, "Elisa, where are you?"

"In my room, dressing. I'm not ready. There's hot water for your bath. Hurry up. It's getting late."

When she heard him splashing in the tub, Elisa laid his dark suit on the bed, and shirt and socks and tie beside it. She stood his polished shoes on the floor beside the bed. Then she went to the porch and sat primly and stiffly down. She looked toward the river road where the willow-line was still



yellow with frosted leaves so that under the high gray fog they seemed a thin band of sunshine. This was the only color in the gray afternoon. She sat unmoving for a long time.

Henry came banging out of the door, shoving his tie inside his vest as he came. Elisa stiffened and her face grew tight. Henry stopped short and looked at her. "Why—why, Elisa. You look so nice!"

"Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by 'nice'?"

Henry blundered on. "I don't know. I mean you look different, strong and happy."

"I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean 'strong'?"

He looked bewildered. "You're playing some kind of a game," he said helplessly. "It's a kind of a play. You look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon."

For a second she lost her rigidity. "Henry! Don't talk like that. You didn't know what you said." She grew complete again. "I am strong," she boasted. "I never knew before how strong."

Henry looked down toward the tractor shed, and when he brought his eyes back to her, they were his own again. "I'll get out the car. You can put on your coat while I'm starting."

Elisa went into the house. She heard him drive to the gate and idle down his motor, and then she took a long time to put on her hat. She pulled it here and pressed it there. When Henry turned the motor off she slipped into her coat and went out.

The little roadster bounced along on the dirt road by the river, raising the birds and driving the rabbits into the brush. Two cranes flapped heavily over the willow-line and dropped into the river-bed.

Far ahead on the road Elisa saw a dark speck in the dust. She suddenly felt empty. She did not hear Henry's talk. She tried not to look; she did not want to see the little heap of sand and green shoots, but she could not help herself. The chrysanthemums lay in the road close to the wagon tracks. But not the pot; he had kept that. As the car passed them she remembered the good bitter smell, and a little shudder went through her. She felt ashamed of her strong planter's hands, that were no use, lying palms up in her lap.

The roadster turned a bend and she saw the caravan ahead. She swung full round toward her husband so that she could not see the little covered wagon and the mismatched team as the car passed.

In a moment they had left behind them the man who had not known or needed to know what she said, the bargainer. She did not look back.

To Henry she said loudly, to be heard above the motor, "It will be good, to-night, a good dinner."

"Now you're changed again," Henry complained. He took one hand from the wheel and patted her knee. "I ought to take you in to dinner oftener. It would be good for both of us. We get so heavy out on the ranch."

"Henry," she asked, "could we have wine at dinner?"

"Sure. Say! That will be fine."

She was silent for a while; then she said, "Henry, at those prize fights do the men hurt each other very much?"

"Sometimes a little, not often. Why?"

"Well, I've read how they break noses, and blood runs down their chests. I've read how the fighting gloves get heavy and soggy with blood."

He looked round at her. "What's the matter, Elisa? I didn't know you read things like that." He brought the car to a stop, then turned to the right over the Salinas River bridge.

"Do any women ever go to the fights?" she asked.

"Oh, sure, some. What's the matter, Elisa? Do you want to go? I don't think you'd like it, but I'll take you if you really want to go."

She relaxed limply in the seat. "Oh, no. No. I don't want to go. I'm sure I don't." Her face was turned away from him. "It will be enough if we can have wine. It will be plenty." She turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly—like an old woman.

## THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY

*James Thurber (1942)*

"WE'RE going through!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hurricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased: *ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa*. The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge, hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hmm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat beside him, with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five," she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said

Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that," she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then he drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot.

. . . "It's the millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan," said the pretty nurse. "Yes?" said Walter Mitty, removing his gloves slowly. "Who has the case?" "Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow, but there are two specialists here, Dr. Remington from New York and Dr. Pritchard-Mitford from London. He flew over." A door opened down a long, cool corridor and Dr. Renshaw came out. He looked distraught and haggard. "Hello, Mitty," he said. "We're having the devil's own time with McMillan, the millionaire banker and close personal friend of Roosevelt. Obstreosis of the ductal tract. Tertiary. Wish you'd take a look at him." "Glad to," said Mitty.

In the operating room there were whispered introductions: "Dr. Remington, Dr. Mitty; Dr. Pritchard-Mitford, Dr. Mitty." "I've read your book on streptothricosis," said Pritchard-Mitford, shaking hands. "A brilliant performance, sir." "Thank you," said Walter Mitty. "Didn't know you were in the States, Mitty," grumbled Remington. "Coals to Newcastle, bringing Mitford and me up here for a tertiary." "You are very kind," said Mitty. A huge, complicated machine, connected to the operating table, with many tubes and wires, began at this moment to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. "The new anaesthetizer is giving way!" shouted an interne. "There is no one in the East who knows how to fix it!" "Quiet, man!" said Mitty, in a low, cool voice. He sprang to the machine, which was now going pocketa-pocketa-queep-pocketa-queep. He began fingering delicately a row of glistening dials. "Give me a fountain pen!" he snapped. Someone handed him a fountain pen. He pulled a faulty piston out of the machine and inserted the pen in its place. "That will hold for ten minutes," he said. "Get on with the operation." A nurse hurried over and whispered to Renshaw, and Mitty saw the man turn pale. "Coreopsis has set in," said Renshaw nervously. "If you would take over, Mitty?" Mitty looked at him and at the craven figure of Benbow, who drank, and at the grave, uncertain faces of the two great specialists. "If you wish," he said. They slipped a white gown on him; he adjusted a mask and drew on thin gloves; nurses handed him shining . . .

"Back it up, Mac! Look out for that Buick!" Walter Mitty jammed on the brakes. "Wrong lane, Mac," said the parking-lot attendant, looking at Mitty closely. "Gee. Yeh," muttered Mitty. He began cautiously to back out of the lane marked "Exit Only." "Leave her sit there," said the attendant. "I'll put her away." Mitty got out of the car. "Hey, better leave the key." "Oh," said Mitty, handing the man the ignition key. The attendant vaulted into the car, backed it up with insolent skill, and put it where it belonged.

They're so damn cocky, thought Walter Mitty, walking along Main Street; they think they know everything. Once he had tried to take his chains off, outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had had to come out in a wrecking car and unwind them, a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I'll wear my right arm in a sling; they won't grin at me then. I'll have my right arm in a sling and they'll see I couldn't possibly take the chains off myself. He kicked at the slush on the sidewalk. "Overshoes," he said to himself, and he began looking for a shoe store.

When he came out into the street again, with the overshoes in a box under his arm, Walter Mitty began to wonder what the other thing was his wife had told him to get. She had told him twice before they set out from their house for Waterbury. In a way he hated these weekly trips to town—he was always getting something wrong. Kleenex, he thought, Squibb's, razor blades? No. Toothpaste, toothbrush, bicarbonate, carborundum, initiative and referendum? He gave it up. But she would remember it. "Where's the what's-it's-name?" she would ask. "Don't tell me you forgot the what's-it's-name." A newsboy went by shouting something about the Waterbury trial.

... "Perhaps this will refresh your memory." The District Attorney suddenly thrust a heavy automatic at the quiet figure on the witness stand. "Have you ever seen this before?" Walter Mitty took the gun and examined it expertly. "This is my Webley-Vickers 50.80," he said calmly. An excited buzz ran around the courtroom. The Judge rapped for order. "You are a crack shot with any sort of firearms, I believe?" said the District Attorney, insinuatingly. "Objection!" shouted Mitty's attorney. "We have shown that the defendant could not have fired the shot. We have shown that he wore his right arm in a sling on the night of the fourteenth of July." Walter Mitty raised his hand briefly and the bickering attorneys were stilled. "With any known make of gun," he said evenly, "I could have killed Gregory Fitzhurst at three hundred feet *with my left hand*." Pandemonium broke loose in the courtroom. A woman's scream rose above the bedlam and suddenly a lovely, dark-haired girl was in Walter Mitty's arms. The District Attorney struck at her savagely. Without rising from his chair, Mitty let the man have it on the point of the chin. "You miserable cur!" . . .

"Puppy biscuit," said Walter Mitty. He stopped walking and the build-

ings of Waterbury rose up out of the misty courtroom and surrounded him again. A woman who was passing laughed. "He said 'Puppy biscuit,'" she said to her companion. "That man said 'Puppy biscuit' to himself." Walter Mitty hurried on. He went into an A. & P., not the first one he came to but a smaller one farther up the street. "I want some biscuit for small, young dogs," he said to the clerk. "Any special brand, sir?" The greatest pistol shot in the world thought a moment. "It says 'Puppies Bark for It' on the box," said Walter Mitty.

His wife would be through at the hairdresser's in fifteen minutes, Mitty saw in looking at his watch, unless they had trouble drying it; sometimes they had trouble drying it. She didn't like to get to the hotel first; she would want him to be there waiting for her as usual. He found a big leather chair in the lobby, facing a window, and he put the overshoes and the puppy biscuit on the floor beside it. He picked up an old copy of *Liberty* and sank down into the chair. "Can Germany Conquer the World Through the Air?" Walter Mitty looked at the pictures of bombing planes and of ruined streets.

. . . "The cannonading has got the wind up in young Raleigh, sir," said the sergeant. Captain Mitty looked up at him through tousled hair. "Get him to bed," he said wearily, "with the others. I'll fly alone." "But you can't, sir," said the sergeant anxiously. "It takes two men to handle that bomber and the Archies are pounding hell out of the air. Von Richtman's circus is between here and Saulier." "Somebody's got to get that ammunition dump," said Mitty. "I'm going over. Spot of brandy?" He poured a drink for the sergeant and one for himself. War thundered and whined around the dugout and battered at the door. There was a rending of wood, and splinters flew through the room. "A bit of a near thing," said Captain Mitty carelessly. "The box barrage is closing in," said the sergeant. "We only live once, Sergeant," said Mitty, with his faint, fleeting smile. "Or do we?" He poured another brandy and tossed it off. "I never see a man could hold his brandy like you, sir," said the sergeant. "Begging your pardon, sir." Captain Mitty stood up and strapped on his huge Webley-Vickers automatic. "It's forty kilometers through hell, sir," said the sergeant. Mitty finished one last brandy. "After all," he said softly, "what isn't?" The pounding of the cannon increased; there was the rat-tat-tatting of machine guns, and from somewhere came the menacing pocketa-pocketa-pocketa of the new flame-throwers. Walter Mitty walked to the door of the dugout humming "Auprès de Ma Blonde." He turned and waved to the sergeant. "Cheerio!" he said. . . .

Something struck his shoulder. "I've been looking all over this hotel for you," said Mrs. Mitty. "Why do you have to hide in this old chair? How did you expect me to find you?" "Things close in," said Walter Mitty vaguely. "What?" Mrs. Mitty said. "Did you get the what's-it's-name? The puppy biscuit? What's in that box?" "Overshoes," said Mitty. "Couldn't you have put them on in the store?" "I was thinking," said Walter Mitty,

"Does it ever occur to you that I am sometimes thinking?" She looked at him. "I'm going to take your temperature when I get you home," she said.

They went out through the revolving doors that made a faintly derisive whistling sound when you pushed them. It was two blocks to the parking lot. At the drugstore on the corner she said, "Wait here for me. I forgot something. I won't be a minute." She was more than a minute. Walter Mitty lighted a cigarette. It began to rain, rain with sleet in it. He stood up against the wall of the drugstore, smoking. . . . He put his shoulders back and his heels together. "To hell with the handkerchief," said Walter Mitty scornfully. He took one last drag on his cigarette and snapped it away. Then, with that faint, fleeting smile playing about his lips, he faced the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last.

## CLAUDIA

*Rose Franken* (1941)

### CHARACTERS

MRS. BROWN	CLAUDIA NAUGHTON	Fritz	MADAME DARUSCHKA
DAVID NAUGHTON	BERTHA	JERRY SEYMOURE	JULIA NAUGHTON

### SCENES

Act I. A Friday evening in early fall.

Act II. The following afternoon.

Act III. The same evening.

The time is the present.

The action of the play takes place in the Naughtons' living room at Stillbrook, seventy miles out of New York

*Claudia* was first produced at the Booth Theatre, New York City, on February 12, 1941, by John Golden.

## ACT I

THE LOW-CEILINGED living room of a skillfully restored 1760 house, with which judicious liberties have been taken. Original hall entrance extreme left. Entrance to dining room upper right. Stairway lower left. Fireplace lower right. Terrace upper left center. The room is not richly furnished, but it is informed with beauty and taste, lacking all flavor of the suburban.

DAVID, CLAUDIA and MRS. BROWN are present at Rise of Curtain.

DAVID—a clean, good-looking, virile thirty—is reading the stock-market page.

MRS. BROWN *is seated on sofa, knitting a sweater. She is in her fifties—a gentle woman, with an unexpected dash of humor, and a code of robust contempts.*

CLAUDIA, *sitting in her own light, is engaged in going over her checkbook and vouchers at the desk. She is very young, and full of voltage. She is dressed in a one-piece wool frock, and her hair-do is simple and childlike. For a long moment after the curtain rises, no one speaks. MRS. BROWN counts stitches, CLAUDIA wrestles over her accounts, and DAVID is doing some tall mental figuring.*

MRS. BROWN. Are you watching the time, David?

DAVID. What, Mother?

CLAUDIA [*ears in the back of her head*]. Are you watching the time?—No, he's not watching the time. Why begin that nonsense again? You're not going back to town tonight.

DAVID. You've an hour—almost.

MRS. BROWN. Without rushing, I hope. I don't like that rushing business. [*Looks over her glasses in mild suggestion*] Get under the desk, why don't you, Claudia?

CLAUDIA. I can see. I can see well enough to see that this wonderful bank has made a mistake again.

MRS. BROWN. Banks don't make mistakes.

DAVID. They can't make mistakes. I've told you that a dozen times.

CLAUDIA. Go ahead. Take their part against your wife. And anyway, why can't they? I'd like to know. Are they God?

DAVID. They use adding machines.

CLAUDIA. What does that prove? We use a washing machine and look at your shirt last week.

DAVID. You talk to her, Mother. You gave birth to her.

MRS. BROWN. You married her. She's yours now.

DAVID. Go over your figures again.

CLAUDIA. I've gone over them. And this time, if you please, they've made a mistake of a hundred and two dollars and two cents—their favor. Naturally their favor. It's a racket.

DAVID [*crucified*]. Get this through your head. If they're so much as a single penny out of the way, they sit up all night to find the error—

CLAUDIA [*pleasantly*]. Then they do make errors.

DAVID. They do not!

CLAUDIA. Then why do they sit up all night?

DAVID. Claudia, for the love of Heaven. I'm reading.

CLAUDIA [*asking for trouble*]. I don't call going over the stock market reading.

MRS. BROWN. What do you think I ought to do about those foreign bonds of mine, David?

DAVID. Forget them.

MRS. BROWN. I might need a little cash, though. I wish you'd tell me what to sell.

CLAUDIA [*pen in mouth*]. Don't you let David advise you. The minute he sells something it goes up, and the minute he buys something it goes down.

MRS. BROWN. Take the pen out of your mouth. Speak plainly.

CLAUDIA [*plainly*]. And then he buys some more because it's cheap, and it goes down further. That's what he's doing now. Kicking himself. I know the look.

DAVID. How would you like a good bat in the nose? . . . This is no market to sell in, Mother.

CLAUDIA. We'll lend you some money. We're rich, we sold a pig— What do you want money for, anyway?

MRS. BROWN [*slightly evasive*]. Come here, let me measure this sleeve.

CLAUDIA. In a minute. How's this for a letter? [*Reads what she has written*] United Banks of America. My dear Gentlemen . . .

MRS. BROWN. Just: 'Gentlemen.'

DAVID. Or just: 'My dear—' What are you writing the bank for?

CLAUDIA. Telling them to credit my account with a hundred and two dollars and two cents—I need it like anything.

DAVID. Bring me your book and vouchers.

CLAUDIA [*rising with alacrity*]. Yes, sir.

DAVID. Too bad the way I have to coax you. [*As he takes book, a variety of notes and swatches of material flutter to the floor*] What do you keep in here?

CLAUDIA [*succinctly*]. Things.

DAVID. No wonder you can't think straight. [*Glancing down page*] What's this? Gr Bl—two exclamation points—question mark—hyphen—

CLAUDIA [*peering over his shoulder—stumped*]. Gr—Bl— [*Remembers*] My gray blouse.

DAVID. What's your gray blouse doing in your checkbook?

CLAUDIA. I have to remind me to call the dry cleaner. Any objections?

DAVID. Get yourself a diary. What's this figure, three or five?

CLAUDIA. Three. My sweet angel.

DAVID. Do you have to breathe down my neck?

CLAUDIA. You don't like me to breathe down your neck?

DAVID [*finding check*]. Oh, so it was a three, was it? Grain Company, fifty-five dollars. That's two dollars accounted for.

CLAUDIA [*drawing a red herring*]. Fifty-five dollars for grain! It costs more to feed Majesty than it costs to feed us—

DAVID [*on the defensive*]. Majesty gives you milk and cream and butter, doesn't she?

CLAUDIA. She didn't for a long time, and she kept on eating just the same,



I don't grudge it to the poor thing, but I mean, after all, she was definitely loafing.

DAVID. She wasn't definitely loafing; she was dry. She had a calf. Anyway that feed bill includes the chickens and the pigs.

CLAUDIA. You can buy an awful lot of milk and eggs and bacon for fifty-five dollars. You can get positively bilious for fifty-five dollars.

DAVID. Do you want to give up the farm and move back to a stuffy city? [*He takes her answer for granted*] Then be quiet while I go over the rest of your brilliant bookkeeping.

CLAUDIA [*virtuously*]. Well, please remember it wasn't a mistake in addition; it was a mistake in reading. In adding and subtracting, I'm perfect.

DAVID [*snorting*]. You're perfect, are you? What's nine from thirteen?

CLAUDIA [*belligerently*]. Where?

DAVID. There. Just where my pencil is.

CLAUDIA [*in conflict. Then decides that if she doesn't stick up for herself, no one else will*]. Nine from thirteen is six. What do you think it is?

DAVID. Never mind what I think. Count it out on your fingers. Go on. Nine from . . .

CLAUDIA [*magnanimously*]. Very well, four.

MRS. BROWN. For that, I slaved all my life to send her to school. [*Rises and approaches CLAUDIA with sweater*]

CLAUDIA. Anyway, there's still a hundred the bank owes me.

MRS. BROWN [*holds out CLAUDIA's right arm, and measures*]. Stand still.

CLAUDIA. Scratch. Please. Right there.

MRS. BROWN. How can I measure this if you wiggle around.

CLAUDIA. Then get the right place. [*MRS. BROWN rubs CLAUDIA's back detachedly while gauging sweater*]

DAVID [*adding*]. Forty-eight, fifty-three, fifty-eight. Can't you make out anything else but five-dollar checks?

CLAUDIA. What's the matter with five-dollar checks?—Mrs. Brown! Put more emotion in it!

MRS. BROWN [*thumping hard*]. David's right. Draw a check for twenty-five dollars, and be done with it.

DAVID. Don't you know it costs the bank money every time a check is put through?

CLAUDIA [*with dignity*]. I have my own system. Please don't interfere with the way I do things. [*Breaks off to speak to her mother*] That's enough— [*To DAVID*] And stop worrying about the bank losing money.

DAVID [*harried*]. Can you manage to keep quiet? Three from two is nine—borrow one— Here, you forgot to borrow one. No, you didn't either.

CLAUDIA [*morally*]. I never forget to borrow one.

DAVID. Damned if I can find where you slipped up.

CLAUDIA. I should think that bank would be so red in the face—

DAVID. A bank doesn't have to get red in the face. Once and for all, a bank doesn't make mistakes!

CLAUDIA. Yet you admit—

DAVID. I admit nothing of the kind—

CLAUDIA [*to her mother*]. He admits nothing of the kind!—When will the sweater be finished, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN [*rolling it up into a neat bundle*]. I'll have it for you next time I come, Mrs. Naughton.

CLAUDIA. Will you please tell me why you're going home?

MRS. BROWN. Because I want to. I'm tired of being under your thumb. [BERTHA enters from kitchen. She is a plump, middle-aged European with the proverbial heart of gold. Her voice is filled with soft foreign inflections, and her quality is gentle, though authoritative].

BERTHA. Excuse me. Fritz is outside. He would like please to see you.

DAVID [*looking up from vouchers*]. Let him come in, Bertha.

CLAUDIA. Bertha, my mother won't stay for the weekend.

BERTHA [*distressed*]. Oh, that is too bad . . .

MRS. BROWN. I don't want to outwear my welcome.

CLAUDIA. Don't believe her. It's your cooking, Bertha. She says it isn't fit to eat.

MRS. BROWN [*almost upset*]. Claudia, behave! You're a wonderful cook, Bertha.

BERTHA [*saddened*]. But you didn't finish your dinner. You just picked.

CLAUDIA [*in swift apprehension*]. Bertha's right, you hardly ate a thing tonight.

MRS. BROWN. Nonsense, I had a huge plate of that marvelous stew. [Abruptly interested] What was it, Bertha—liver and dumplings?

BERTHA. Ach, no; kidneys!

MRS. BROWN [*faintly. Her enthusiasm vanishing*]. Kidneys?

DAVID [*touchy*]. What's the matter with kidneys?

CLAUDIA [*scathingly*]. Such a manly dish.

BERTHA [*talking them up*]. They are good.

MRS. BROWN [*struggling to be fair*]. But they have that peculiar little taste—

DAVID [*helpfully*]. That's the kidneys.

• CLAUDIA. Use a little tact and tell her it's the seasoning. [As DAVID rises and goes toward stairs] Where're you going? [DAVID merely gives her a look. She continues, unfazed] The discussion was too much for him. [Sniffs incredulously] Do I smell fresh bread?

BERTHA [*remembering*]. Ach, it is time I took it out of the oven! [Starts out]

MRS. BROWN. Bertha, wait a minute. Do you mean to say that's home-made bread?

BERTHA [*both disdainful and apologetic*]. Baker's bread is a crime to fill your stomach with!

CLAUDIA [*with a goggling look to her mother*]. Oh, I couldn't think of trying a piece now!

BERTHA. It will be too fresh; it will only make you sick. [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*shouting after her*]. That's my responsibility!

MRS. BROWN [*looking around for a piece of wood to knock*]. She belongs in a museum— How long is it now?

CLAUDIA. Two weeks Tuesday. [*She knocks on wood, too*]

MRS. BROWN. That's the longest any of them stayed.

CLAUDIA. And they're perfect—both of them.

MRS. BROWN. What I love about Bertha—she doesn't use a mop.

CLAUDIA. The kitchen floor doesn't know what struck it, the way that scrubbing brush goes in all the corners.

MRS. BROWN. They must have had a wonderful reference from their last place.

CLAUDIA. They didn't have any.

MRS. BROWN [*taken aback*]. They didn't?

CLAUDIA. They hadn't worked for a long while. [*As MRS. BROWN frowns*]  
But it doesn't matter. They have lovely faces.

MRS. BROWN. Faces aren't everything.

CLAUDIA. They have a sense of humor, too. And they love children; they won't mind our having a whole houseful.

MRS. BROWN. That's nice of them.

CLAUDIA. It certainly is. All the others objected strenuously; they thought it was fine we didn't have any. Which completely tied our hands.

MRS. BROWN. Have Fritz and Bertha a family?

CLAUDIA. A grown daughter. She's dead. They have quite a sad look, don't you think?

MRS. BROWN. Sad or not, I still say it's dangerous to take people off the streets—

CLAUDIA. We didn't; we took them out of the paper. We advertised in the Connecticut paper and they were our only answer. And only ninety a month for the whole couple. It's enough to make you believe in God.

MRS. BROWN. Claudia, that's sacrilege.

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly; God doesn't just connect with important things. He has His nose in everything.

DAVID [*coming downstairs*]. Who has his nose in everything?

CLAUDIA. God. And you.

DAVID [*a little pugnaciously*]. What do you mean, God?

CLAUDIA [*genuinely*]. I think He's been wonderful to me.

DAVID. You're not getting religious, are you?

CLAUDIA. Don't worry, it's not from my glands; it's from my heart.

DAVID. I don't trust that kind either. You keep your bankbook straight, and that'll be enough religion out of you. Has Fritz come in yet?

CLAUDIA. No. That's what started us talking. I said God sent Fritz and Bertha, and Mamma thinks He should have sent a reference, too.

MRS. BROWN [*with asperity*]. I thought nothing of the kind!

CLAUDIA. You did so. You said faces weren't everything, we should have had a reference. And we should of, shouldn't we of, David?

DAVID. Certainly we should of. Nobody takes people off the streets without a reference.

CLAUDIA. With all the terrible things you hear—

MRS. BROWN. Now stop putting me in the wrong! I merely mentioned—

DAVID. And you're right.

CLAUDIA. We said you were right.

MRS. BROWN. Oh, hush up. [*Rises and goes to stairs*] I'm going up to pack, but before I go, I just want to say that I think it's sad for two grown people to act like such imbeciles.

CLAUDIA [*calling after her*]. I inherit my end from you!

DAVID. Stop heckling the poor woman.

CLAUDIA [*suddenly muted*]. David, I don't think she looks awfully well, do you?

DAVID. I don't wonder, with you for a daughter.

CLAUDIA [*fear tightening in her throat*]. No, I mean it.

DAVID. I thought she looked fine, dear.

CLAUDIA. Really, did you? But I wonder why she won't stay over until Monday. Couldn't you sort of tell her that—

DAVID. Mother doesn't need me to tell her that I like having her here.

CLAUDIA. I know. You've been so sweet to her. And I adore you for it.

DAVID. I bet that was one of the reasons you married me. Because I was good to your mother.

CLAUDIA. It was. That, and the back of your neck.—David, do try to find out what's taking her into town tonight, won't you?

DAVID. God, but you're a curious devil. [*Pulls her to him.—kisses her.* FRITZ appears at dining-room door, wearing a leather jacket and carrying his cap. Like BERTHA, he has strength and dignity, and a basic quality of deep suffering akin to beauty. At moments, however, the tragedy in his face gives way to a flash of humor]

FRITZ. Good evening. [*Proudly withdraws a mammoth egg from his pocket*] Just now I found it in the henhouse. A double yoke.

DAVID. Wow!

CLAUDIA. Did one of ours lay that?

DAVID. The rooster.

CLAUDIA [*coldly*]. If a rooster ever laid eggs, they wouldn't be bigger than marbles— This is practically an omelette! Let me take it up to show Mamma. [*Goes toward stairs. DAVID rises to look for something on desk*]

DAVID. Been out to the barn, Fritz? [*Digresses to CLAUDIA*] Claudia, did you see my pipe scraper?

CLAUDIA. What does it look like?

DAVID. You know that little flat piece of metal I scrape my pipe with?

CLAUDIA [*stopping short. Intelligently*]. Like a sort of a little can opener?

DAVID [*eagerly*]. Yes, where is it?

CLAUDIA [*going on her way*]. I didn't see it. [DAVID *looks after her, frustrated*]

FRITZ [*clearing his throat. Sotto voce*]. I wanted to talk to you about the cow—

CLAUDIA [*pausing on stairs*]. Majesty?

DAVID [*to FRITZ*]. Is she coming in?

CLAUDIA [*curiously*]. Coming from where? Was she out?

FRITZ [*to DAVID*]. I thought I would let the ploughing go, and take her in the morning.

DAVID. By all means.

CLAUDIA [*coming down a couple of steps*]. What is all this? Where are you taking her?

DAVID. To the bull.

CLAUDIA [*intrigued*]. Is there a particular time?

DAVID. Fairly particular.

CLAUDIA. How do you know when it is?

DAVID. A little birdie tells us.

CLAUDIA [*the sophisticate*]. In other words, she's going to start having a calf again.

DAVID. We hope.

CLAUDIA. But it's inhuman; she just had one. What happens if you don't bother her with the bull?

DAVID. She doesn't consider it a bother.

FRITZ [*explaining with simple directness*]. If she didn't have a calf, Mrs. Naughton, she wouldn't give milk.

CLAUDIA. What a lot of shenanigans. [*As she reaches top stair*] There ought to be a simpler method—

DAVID [*calling after her*]. You think one up, and let us know about it!

FRITZ [*to DAVID*]. Mrs. Naughton is new to a farm, no?

DAVID. Very new.

FRITZ. But you, too, are from New York, and you are a very good farmer, Mr. Naughton.

DAVID. It's in my blood, I guess. Someday if I ever get rich enough, I'll give up being an architect and just settle down here, raising pigs.

FRITZ. It is a wonderful life—so peaceful.

DAVID. The only life in the world for my money. I hope you and Bertha are happy with us?

FRITZ [*finding it hard*]. It is that I wanted also to talk to you about, Mr. Naughton. Never have we been so happy in a place. But it is impossible we should stay.

DAVID. I'm sorry to hear that. What's the trouble? Too lonely, or not enough salary?

FRITZ. No, no— It is something else entirely. [*With effort*] Mr. Naughton, we thought if we did our work good, it would not matter. But now we feel you should know about me.

DAVID [*busy with his pipe*]. I know about you, Fritz.

FRITZ. No. I did not tell you. I told you only that for four years I was superintendent of a big estate—but after that—

DAVID [*quietly*]. I know what happened after that too, Fritz.

FRITZ [*incredulously*]. You know where I have been?

DAVID. I couldn't very well leave Mrs. Naughton up here all day alone, with people I couldn't check up on.

FRITZ. But you let us come . . . ?

DAVID. Why not? You can't go on paying for a mistake forever. You have to begin fresh sometime. Besides, there seemed to be a little doubt about your part in the whole thing.

FRITZ [*agitated*]. Yes, but it does not matter. It is over now. Only in a way, it is not over. We could not get a job afterwards, because always I said where I was. And people, always they were sorry, but they would not have us. Then we saw your advertisement. We were up in Bridgeport, a couple's job, where I told the lady, and she was afraid to keep us. She was nice about it, she said she was getting her old gardener back, but we knew, Bertha and I. And Bertha said, "Better we keep our mouths shut, next time."

DAVID. Well, I'm glad you didn't. I'm glad you told me. It makes everything all right. Is that all that's bothering you?

FRITZ [*overwhelmed*]. Mr. Naughton, so much we want not to go away.

DAVID. Then let's forget it.

FRITZ. But Mrs. Naughton—does she know?

DAVID. Not yet. But she'll feel the same way.

FRITZ [*inarticulate with gratitude*]. You are good—you are kind— Thank you. Thank you. [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*coming downstairs*]. Thank you for what?

DAVID. Tell you later.

CLAUDIA. Tell me now.

DAVID. Mother like the egg?

CLAUDIA. She thought it was stunning.—What were you and Fritz talking about so long?

DAVID. I go upstairs—where am I going? I talk to Fritz—what am I talking about? Can't a man have any privacy?

CLAUDIA. What fun is privacy? [*Telephone peals out two short rings*].

That's us! I'll answer. . . . Hello? Yes, this is Ring Two. [*To DAVID*] It's long distance, and everyone's listening in already, the nerve. [*In telephone*] Oh, Julia— Hello! When did you get back? . . . You did? [*Accusingly to DAVID*] Why didn't you tell me Julia was back?

DAVID [*over checkbook again*]. What's so important about it?

CLAUDIA. Have you no feeling for your brother's wife?

DAVID. Not much.

CLAUDIA [*in phone*]. Nothing. I was talking to this silly goop of mine. . . . Tomorrow? That'll be fine—come for lunch. Oh, bring her along! Nonsense. We have the most marvelous couple in the world. We're settled! [*DAVID registers her exultance with discomfort*] How's Hartley? Oh, that's too bad—I hope he'll be all right. Give him my love. Good-bye. About one thirty is fine. [*Hangs up*] She's going to stop off on her way to Boston with Daruschka.

DAVID. What's Daruschka, a drink?

CLAUDIA. The opera star, ignorant.

DAVID [*flatly. He doesn't like opera stars*]. Why?

CLAUDIA. Because she's giving a concert and Julia's driving her up. I'm glad. I adore showing off the place.

DAVID. The pleasure's all yours. What's wrong with Hartley?

CLAUDIA. Acid. Either too much or too little, I forget which—

DAVID. Too much Julia.

CLAUDIA. That's unfair. I'm very fond of Julia; she brings me presents from all her trips. . . . Found the mistake? [*Sits on arm of his chair*]

DAVID. Not yet, but I will— Claudia, look here, I don't want you to go on thinking Fritz and Bertha are so marvelous. Because they're not.

CLAUDIA [*devastated*]. Don't tell me they're leaving.

DAVID. I'm afraid so.

CLAUDIA. I could cry. I thought they liked it here.

DAVID. Fritz has a jail record.

CLAUDIA. *What?* . . . David, stop making jokes about such a thing!

DAVID. It's not a joke.

CLAUDIA. Who told you?

DAVID. He did. Just now. Forgery. He signed somebody else's name to a check.

CLAUDIA [*relieved*]. Oh, is that all? For a minute I thought it was murder. [*Falls back in his lap*] Anyway, I don't believe it.

DAVID. He admitted it.

CLAUDIA [*loyally*]. Well, that was honest of him. What more do you want?

DAVID. He couldn't very well deny it.

CLAUDIA [*slowly*]. I see. Better let them go, then.

DAVID. You don't think I'm going to keep a man who's been in prison? [*He eyes her with sudden misgiving, but her face and manner tell no tales*]

CLAUDIA [*with brusque finality*]. Mamma was certainly right; we should have insisted on a reference. Oh, well—that's that. Better get them out of the house right away.

DAVID [*lifting her to sitting position on arm of chair. Disconcerted*]. But just because a man makes a mistake—and I'm not sure he did . . . [*They look at each other, and then both grin sheepishly*] We're so subtle.

CLAUDIA. Darling, you're not subtle.

DAVID. Oh, I suppose you are.

CLAUDIA. At least I wasn't trying to appear hard-boiled with Fritz thanking me all over the place. [*Pleased*] David, we have beautiful souls, do you know it?

DAVID [*bleakly*]. Or maybe we're just hanging on to a good couple. He is a damn good farmer. He does the work of two men; he's out in the barn at five every morning.

CLAUDIA. I don't wonder. It's a job in itself, keeping all the animals pregnant.

DAVID. Bred's the word.

CLAUDIA. It's the same principle.—A farm is really a very sexy place, isn't it, David?

DAVID. Should be, if it's a good farm. I wish I knew where you put that pipe scraper.

CLAUDIA. I didn't take it, so how could I put it any place?—David, let's talk about sex for a minute.

DAVID. Why talk about it?

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly. Look. Take Majesty. She doesn't have to have any personal magnetism. Nature does it for her. But Nature doesn't do one thing for a woman but make it harder. You let a woman go without a girdle like a cow and see what happens.

DAVID. You don't wear a girdle.

CLAUDIA. But have I got sex-appeal?

DAVID [*weighing it*]. You have a nice spirit.

CLAUDIA. Why did you marry me, if I'm not attractive!

DAVID. There were other things about you. You don't smoke; you don't drink— [*She picks up the egg from the desk to hurl at him.* MRS. BROWN comes downstairs with a small travelling bag, dressed to return to New York]

MRS. BROWN [*sharply*]. Claudia! That good egg!

CLAUDIA [*smoldering*]. He says I have no sex—

MRS. BROWN. That's lovely talk. [*BERTHA enters with a tray of bread and milk*]

BERTHA. I thought you might like to taste the bread. And I wrapped some for you to take home, Mrs. Brown.

MRS. BROWN. That was lovely, Bertha.—No milk, thanks.



CLAUDIA [*also waving milk away, but falling on bread*]. This is divine. [Offers it to DAVID] Have a little bite.

DAVID. I just had supper.

CLAUDIA [*affronted*]. Well, so did I.

DAVID. Get away; I'm smoking.—I wish I could find that pipe scraper. Bertha, did you see my pipe scraper?

BERTHA [*pausing at door*]. I don't know what it is, but I am sure not.

CLAUDIA. Come now, confess, Bertha, you have a passion for pipe scrapers! [Offers bread to MRS. BROWN]

MRS. BROWN [*closing her lips against it*]. No!

CLAUDIA [*commandingly*]. Taste! [MRS. BROWN is powerless to resist CLAUDIA's young strength. She samples bread gingerly]

BERTHA [*gratified*]. I get more. [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*calling after her*]. With jelly!

MRS. BROWN. Bertha looked like she'd been crying.

CLAUDIA. Maybe she was peeling onions.

MRS. BROWN. At this hour of the night?

CLAUDIA. I'll tell you later.

MRS. BROWN. No, tell me now.

DAVID [*amused*]. Peas in a pod. [*The telephone peals out one long and two short rings*]

CLAUDIA [*alert*]. Oh! [*Tiptoes to phone*]

DAVID. Hey, that's not us, that's Ring Three! [CLAUDIA, listening, waves him to silence]

MRS. BROWN. Isn't it time to leave yet, David?

DAVID [*consulting his watch*]. Not yet.

CLAUDIA. Sshhhh!

DAVID. Hang up!

MRS. BROWN. Really, you're disgraceful.

CLAUDIA [*doubling with enjoyment*]. Sshhhhhhhhhhhh! [*Takes her time, and then puts receiver in cradle very cautiously*] That was gorgeous. Oh, don't look so holy, you two; it's my only vice.

DAVID. Someday you'll listen once too often, and you'll hear something you don't want to hear.

MRS. BROWN. Listening over the phone is as dishonest as cheating.—What was so gorgeous you were hearing? [CLAUDIA—*arms akimbo*—imitates two back-fence gossipers by nods of her head]

DAVID [*succumbing*]. Who is Ring Three, anyway?

CLAUDIA. Suppose I don't tell you?

DAVID. Don't!

CLAUDIA [*taken aback*]. All right I will. Somebody new. Very English voice. [*She goes into a credible imitation.*] "I say, Mary, old bean, did you find *Sad Ecstasy*?"

MRS. BROWN [*a little petulantly*]. What does that mean, Sad Ecstasy?

CLAUDIA. A manuscript, I suppose, because the good old bean says, "It was in your files, Mr. Jerry! And how are you gettin' along up there all by yourself?"

DAVID. See what the stage is missing.

CLAUDIA. Don't fool yourself, I'd have been there if you hadn't come along.

MRS. BROWN [*with pride*]. She was very good in her class play.

CLAUDIA. Oh, now I know who he is, the butcher told me! He's a writer; he rented the little brown house—you know the one, David—on the river road.

DAVID. He sounds like a first-rate pansy to me.

MRS. BROWN [*conscious of time*]. Watching, David? . . .

CLAUDIA. Has he ever let you miss a train?

MRS. BROWN. All but.

CLAUDIA. Well, I hope you miss this one.

MRS. BROWN. That's darling of you.

CLAUDIA. You're a stubborn good-for-nothing. [*She signals DAVID to talk to her mother*] And Bertha never came back with my bread and jelly. Excuse while I investigate. . . . [*She exits hurriedly to kitchen*]

MRS. BROWN. How do you stand her?

DAVID. Sometimes I have to hang on with my teeth to keep up.

MRS. BROWN. I know that feeling.

DAVID [*wasting no time*]. Look here, why the hell are you going back to town before the weekend?

MRS. BROWN. Why the hell not? I have a home, too.

DAVID. Claudia thinks you have something up your sleeve.

MRS. BROWN [*dismayed*]. She doesn't—

DAVID. So she's right.

MRS. BROWN [*agitated*]. David, that child's worse than a detective. I never have been able to fool her.

DAVID. She's certainly got herself an overdose of mother image.

MRS. BROWN [*unhappily*]. I wish she didn't.

DAVID. I wish she didn't, too.

MRS. BROWN. That's why I was so glad when you bought the place out here.

DAVID. The only thing she doesn't like about it is leaving you in New York.

MRS. BROWN. It's the best thing could have happened to all three of us.

DAVID [*with a kind of quizzical respect*]. You know what it's all about, don't you? In that prim, funny little head of yours?

MRS. BROWN. I ought to. I had the same kind of attachment to my mother. And it didn't make for an easy marriage.

DAVID. Good old umbilical cord, eh? [*A little grimly*] It looks like it's

going to take more than moving to the country to break it with Claudia. She's got a grip like a truck driver.

MRS. BROWN [*tensely*]. She has to learn to let go of the people she loves. To hold close with open hands.

DAVID. That's a pretty big order. But she'll learn.

MRS. BROWN. If only I could be sure of it—without too much hurt to either of you.

DAVID. We won't be hurt. Much as I love her, much as she loves me, it's got to be man and woman between us.

MRS. BROWN. Be patient with her, David.

DAVID. I'm patient.

MRS. BROWN. She's so young. Perhaps I was wrong to let her marry you until she grew up a little more.

DAVID. I knew the gamble I was taking.

MRS. BROWN [*on a breath*]. You're not sorry? . . .

DAVID [*buskily*]. What do you think?

MRS. BROWN [*covering her emotion with a little laugh*]. I think you must love her more than you love yourself.

DAVID. I do. [*Unburdening*] Know what she said to me on the night we were married?

MRS. BROWN. Enough.

DAVID. Enough is right; it almost ruined me. No, but the thing she said that struck out at me was, "David, you couldn't be more darling to me if you were my own father. . . ." And the damndest part of it was, I felt like her father.

MRS. BROWN [*with full knowing*]. I tried to prepare her, but you know Claudia—she knows everything better.

DAVID. She thought the system was antiquated—which didn't help matters.

MRS. BROWN [*elliptically*]. You were a saint—

DAVID. Good Lord, did she turn in a full report to you?

MRS. BROWN. Not very full. Just odds and ends.

DAVID. I'm not a saint; I'm a goldfish.

MRS. BROWN. Don't feel like that. You've been so fine, David. And I know it couldn't all have been a bed of roses.

DAVID [*grinning*]. Very neatly put, Mrs. Brown. But we started off to talk about you, not us. What's taking you back to town?

MRS. BROWN. We have been talking about it more or less.

DAVID. I thought so. Anything wrong, Mother?

MRS. BROWN. Where is she?

DAVID [*crossing to close the dining-room doors*]. She's up to her ears in bread and jelly. Go ahead.

MRS. BROWN [*lightly*]. I have to have my picture taken first thing in the morning.

DAVID. X-ray?

MRS. BROWN. Yes.

DAVID. How long has this been going on?

MRS. BROWN. Oh—perhaps a little too long. I'll know more about it tomorrow.

DAVID [*hiding his shock*]. I'll go with you.

MRS. BROWN. You'll do nothing of the kind; it'll cut into your whole day. Those consultations are endless.

DAVID. So it's a consultation.

MRS. BROWN. I've been to one man.

DAVID. That's a hell of a thing to keep to yourself. [*Glances at her*] I suppose you didn't want to worry Claudia.

MRS. BROWN. I didn't want her on my trail, either.

DAVID [*musingly*]. Funny. You two are so close, and yet you don't say one decent word to each other.

MRS. BROWN. That's our system.

DAVID. Who are you seeing tomorrow?

MRS. BROWN [*reluctantly*]. Ellery Mason. In the afternoon, after the pictures are developed.

DAVID [*slowly*]. Mason's pretty much the last word, isn't he?

MRS. BROWN. He's supposed to be.

DAVID [*with difficulty*]. That's why you wanted to sell some bonds. It means an operation.

MRS. BROWN. If I'm lucky. On the other hand, it might be—just a mistaken diagnosis.

DAVID [*pretending to be convinced*]. Certainly. They're all a bunch of alarmists.

MRS. BROWN [*after a moment's pause*]. No, David. No use our fooling each other. But don't tell Claudia—yet.

DAVID. I won't; and I'm not going to believe it myself either, until those pictures are developed.

CLAUDIA [*entering*]. What's the idea of closing doors on me?

DAVID. Mother'll probably drive back with me tomorrow afternoon.

CLAUDIA. Why go in at all, then?

MRS. BROWN. Because I've an appointment with the dentist. I have a loose bridge. Now are you satisfied?

CLAUDIA. Let's see. [*MRS. BROWN obediently opens her mouth*]

DAVID. Holy smokes! Come on, Mother! [*Grabs suitcase*]

CLAUDIA. Wait for me!

DAVID. Can't! We're late!

MRS. BROWN. Oh, my knitting bag! [*Runs back for it, collides with CLAUDIA*] Get out of my way! David, if I miss that train, I'll wring your neck! [*At door*] Good-bye, Mrs. Naughton!

CLAUDIA. Good-bye, Mrs. Brown! [*Shouting after them*] Drive carefully,

for Heaven's sake! [*As an afterthought*] And David—Bring me a pickle! [*At terrace door*] Yohooo! David! Did you hear me! Buy me a pickle in the village! [*BERTHA enters from dining room*]

BERTHA. Are you calling me, Mrs. Naughton?

CLAUDIA [*crossing to BERTHA with intense purpose*]. No, but while you're here, do you know how to put up pickles, Bertha?

BERTHA. Surely I know. [*FRITZ enters dining-room door with wood*] Fritz, tell Mrs. Naughton do I know how to put up pickles.

FRITZ. Beautiful. Next year, when we have a good garden, we will have dozens of jars. [*Bends to freshen fire*]

CLAUDIA. I wish it was next year now.—Oh, and talking of food, my sister-in-law's coming for lunch tomorrow, with an important opera singer, so we'll all be very proper. Fritz in his white coat and everything.

FRITZ [*apologetically*]. I should have it on now.

BERTHA. Yes, Fritz, you should not look like family in the house.

CLAUDIA. Oh, that's all right—and besides— [*Groping for the right word*] I want you both to feel that this is your home—and nobody remembers what happened before you came here. [*Changes subject hastily*] Can you make a cheese soufflé, Bertha?

BERTHA [*profoundly moved*]. Oh, yes. That is simple. But first, soup surely?

CLAUDIA. Bouillon. Clear. No noodles.

BERTHA [*on a disappointed echo*]. No noodles.

CLAUDIA. And a green salad, no garlic.

BERTHA [*with increasing wistfulness*]. No garlic.

CLAUDIA. Julia doesn't like the smell afterwards.—And cut up fruit for dessert.

BERTHA [*summing it up*]. No lunch. But if that is what you want, I will make it.

CLAUDIA. Me? I'd much rather have steak and apple pie.

BERTHA [*eagerly*]. Then I make a nice steak and apple pie!

CLAUDIA. No, you don't; it's not in good taste, says Julia. Oh, and, Bertha, if she should ask for a glass of homemade milk, put a little cream in, so she thinks Majesty is something extra special. Or is that a little shady?

BERTHA [*largely*]. Ach, no— It all comes from the same cow. [*The bell rings*]

CLAUDIA. That's Mamma back again; they were too late for the train. I'll go! [*Rushes out to door*]

BERTHA [*as a man's voice sounds in hall*]. It's company. Quick, we must get out.

FRITZ. I must fix first the fire in the bedroom. [*Hurries upstairs with wood*. BERTHA vanishes kitchenwards as CLAUDIA comes back, followed by JERRY SEYMOUR, a tall, good-looking young man, somewhat older than DAVID, with a small mustache and an unmistakable air of the world. He is

*dressed in sports clothes, and has distinction and experience—charming to old ladies and children, even though they bore him. When he speaks, it is easy to recognize him from CLAUDIA's imitation of the telephone conversation]*

JERRY. This is very good of you

CLAUDIA [*indicating telephone*]. It's on the desk; go right ahead.

JERRY. Thank you very much. [*Lifts receiver*] Oh, Operator, will you connect me with the nearest garage? [*His face falls*] But look here, they can't all be closed.

CLAUDIA [*amiably*]. They are though. Everything closes around here at nine o'clock.

JERRY [*hanging up receiver*]. What's one supposed to do if one gets a flat tire in this neck of the woods?

CLAUDIA. People in this neck of the woods fix it themselves.

JERRY. The devil of that is, I haven't got a jack in the car.

CLAUDIA. You don't look as if you'd be good at it anyway.

JERRY [*amused but nettled*]. I'd like to know why you say that?

CLAUDIA. I don't know; it's just something about a man a woman feels—

JERRY. Matter of fact, it's not one of the things I most enjoy.

CLAUDIA. Fritz'll fix it for you.

JERRY. Please don't bother; it's only a short walk to the corners.

CLAUDIA. You're crazy; it's miles. [*Calls*] Fritz! Oh, Fritz! [*FRITZ appears on stairs*] Fritz, this neighbor of ours had a flat tire in front of our door, and no jack. Will you fix it for him?

FRITZ. Gladly.

JERRY. But this is an imposition. I don't want to trouble you, sir.

FRITZ. It's no trouble at all.

CLAUDIA [*as FRITZ exits*] Fritz thrives on flat tires.

JERRY. That makes me feel very low. The least I can do is lend him a hand.

CLAUDIA. Don't. He's a nymphomaniac when it comes to doing things himself.

JERRY [*pausing*]. I say, haven't you got your maniacs a bit mixed up?

CLAUDIA [*frowning*]. Nympho. [*Brightly*] Of course. That's setting fire to things.

JERRY [*weighing it*]. Not really.

CLAUDIA [*apprehensively*]. It isn't stealing, is it?

JERRY [*again considering the implications*]. Not really.

CLAUDIA [*faintly*]. Oh.

JERRY. Definitely "Oh"—and I shouldn't advise you to go around calling people it.

CLAUDIA. Why not? Sex is a very enviable accomplishment.

JERRY. Oh? [*He puts his hat down*] I say, you sound very much like a bad novel. The sort where all the characters are either very precocious or very whimsical.

CLAUDIA. There isn't a grain of whimsy in my make-up. My husband wouldn't put up with whimsy.

JERRY [*astonished*]. Good Lord—you're not married?

CLAUDIA. What would I be doing here if I weren't?

JERRY. I haven't the vaguest notion. You see, I thought you were your daughter.

CLAUDIA. Now who's whimsical?

JERRY. I'm just confused.

CLAUDIA. Why?

JERRY. Because all this is very confusing, I suppose. [*Getting down to facts*] This is a beautiful old house. Tell me, do you live here all year round?

CLAUDIA. Oh, yes, we just bought the place. We farm it.

JERRY. As a hobby?

CLAUDIA. I should say not. My husband puts his whole heart and soul in it. Look at this. [*Picks up egg and gives it to him*]

JERRY [*taking it gingerly*]. It's a decoy!

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly; it's an egg.

JERRY [*appraising its heft*]. It would discourage me enormously if I were a hen.

CLAUDIA. If I were a rooster, it'd give me an inferiority complex.

JERRY. Fair enough.—I say, what other animals have you got? Dogs?

CLAUDIA. A Great Dane.

JERRY. Where is he? Not allowed in the house? Shame on you.

CLAUDIA. She lives in the house—ordinarily. [*Rises in slight embarrassment*] And we have a lovely Persian cat.

JERRY [*tactfully*]. Also—ordinarily?

CLAUDIA. No, she's at the vet having things done to him.

JERRY. And then he'll be a house cat, will she?

CLAUDIA. We hope it will. . . . I'm glad you like cats and dogs. I wouldn't marry a man who didn't like dogs.

JERRY. I don't see the connection, but would you marry a man if he liked cats?

CLAUDIA. Then I wouldn't trust him. It's either cats and dogs—or just dogs.

JERRY. Cats not compulsory.

CLAUDIA. No. My husband isn't mad about cats either. He doesn't kick them or anything, but he objects to the hairs on his suits. I guess there are some men who think that dog shed is more virile than cat shed.

JERRY. That's a very profound understatement of fact.—Look here, how long have you been married?

CLAUDIA. Ages. Almost a year. How'd you like a glass of our own milk? [*Crosses to table and pours a glass for him*]

JERRY. Frankly, I loathe milk.

CLAUDIA. So do I, but you're company so you'll have to drink it.

JERRY. That's rank sophistry!

CLAUDIA. You'll enjoy it. It's different than store milk.

JERRY [*eyeing it unhappily*]. Even so, I don't think I shall enjoy it. It looks so white. So damn white.

CLAUDIA. Oh, go on and drink it. It'll do you good.

JERRY [*rebelliously*]. But I don't want to be done good to. [*Suspiciously*] You're one of those domestic women, aren't you?

CLAUDIA. Well, no man should housekeep for himself.

JERRY [*hiding milk on desk behind lamp*]. How do you know I housekeep for myself?

CLAUDIA [*casually*]. Through Mary.

JERRY. Mary?

CLAUDIA [*unruffled*]. Oh, I know all about you.

JERRY. How?

CLAUDIA. I'm a listener.

JERRY. A what?

CLAUDIA [*losing her composure*]. A listener. We're on the same party wire. [*Blurting it out defensively*] I listen.

JERRY [*aghast*]. And you admit it?

CLAUDIA. I'm not proud of it. I try to overcome it.

JERRY [*righteously*]. I have never listened over a party wire in my life.

CLAUDIA. My husband's the same way!

JERRY [*uneasily*]. He sounds frightfully well-behaved in every respect.

CLAUDIA. Oh, no, it's just that he can't stand little crimes like reading somebody's newspaper over their shoulder—or taking a spoon out of a hotel. But give him an out-and-out scoundrel, and he takes his hat off to him.

JERRY. Then I'm his man. I haven't a scruple.

CLAUDIA. I thought you said you never listened over a party wire in your life?

JERRY. I haven't. This is my first acquaintance with a party wire. I do read other people's letters, however. I enjoy them immensely. And I have no hesitancy when it comes to other men's wives.

CLAUDIA [*incredulously*]. Not any?

JERRY [*firmly*]. Not any. [FRITZ enters]

FRITZ. The car is ready now. [JERRY rises. CLAUDIA studies him out of the corner of her eye]

JERRY [*to Fritz*]. Oh—oh, thanks. Thank you very much.

FRITZ. It was nothing. I was happy to do it. [*Goes upstairs to finish laying fire*]

JERRY [*looking after him*]. Is he always so—reserved?

CLAUDIA [*compassionately*]. He's suffered a lot in his life. [*Spies glass of milk on desk*] Wasting good milk—that's not very nice.

JERRY. I know it isn't. I'm not a very nice person. At least I haven't been up to now. [*Reverting. Seriously*] Surely you feel more than pity for him?

CLAUDIA [*genuinely*]. Who, Fritz? Oh yes, I'm crazy about him.



JERRY [*after a moment's conflict*]. I see.

CLAUDIA [*adds with reluctant honesty*]. Of course, every fly has its ointment.

JERRY [*gravely*]. And every silver lining has its cloud.

CLAUDIA. Nothing is perfect, I don't suppose.

JERRY [*misreading an attempt to be gallant*]. Nothing. [*Lifts her hand to his lips with a gesture of real decency and relinquishment*] Forget what I said about other men's wives—it doesn't go here—

CLAUDIA [*vulnerable*]. Why doesn't it?

JERRY [*after a small pause*]. Let's say it's because your husband was good enough to fix my tire for me. Good-bye—and good luck. [*Exits swiftly*]

CLAUDIA [*getting it slowly*]. My husband! [*FRITZ comes downstairs*]

FRITZ. Is there anything else I can do for you, Mrs. Naughton?

CLAUDIA [*with implication*]. No, thank you, Fritz.

FRITZ. Good night. [*He exits dining room, CLAUDIA crosses to mirror, and studies her face with cordial disapproval. DAVID whistles off stage, then enters terrace door*]

DAVID. What's the matter—too proud to whistle back?

CLAUDIA. I don't feel like whistling.

DAVID. Here's your pickle. Catch!

CLAUDIA. I don't feel athletic, either.

DAVID. I went miles out of my way to get that pickle; the least you can say is thank you.

CLAUDIA. Thank you. [*Tragically*] David, I have a face like a baked potato!

DAVID [*discriminating*]. No, dear; baked apple!

CLAUDIA. Well, anyway, you were right. I have no more sex than a guinea hen! Fritz was the only man in the house and he was upstairs and I began talking about a fly, like a fool, and he thought he was my husband.

DAVID. Who? The fly, or Fritz?

CLAUDIA. Jerry!

DAVID. Who's Jerry?

CLAUDIA. The man I listened to over the phone. He just this minute left.

DAVID. What was he doing here?

CLAUDIA. He had a flat tire. Fritz fixed it for him.

DAVID. Why didn't he fix it himself?

CLAUDIA. He's not the type to carry a jack.

DAVID. What type is he?

CLAUDIA. He's not only English, he's British. And miles taller than you, David.

DAVID. I don't like him.

CLAUDIA. He was lovely about it when I told him I listened. He said he had no scruples, either.

DAVID. Glad to know it.

CLAUDIA [*joyously*]. You're jealous.

DAVID [*pooh-poohing the idea*]. Who? Me? I just don't want him hanging around here using Fritz.

CLAUDIA [*bitterly*]. So that's your worry! Using Fritz. I wish I could make you eat those words. I wish I could make you so jealous you'd want to kill him!

DAVID [*aping her with enjoyment*]. With my bare hands.

CLAUDIA. If any man ever insulted me the way he insulted you, I wouldn't sit there grinning about it!

DAVID [*continuing to clown*]. How'd he insult me?

CLAUDIA. First he said, "I enjoy reading other people's letters, and I have no hesitancy when it comes to other men's wives."

DAVID [*his good nature vanishing*]. So? . . .

CLAUDIA [*scathingly*]. Oh, you don't have to get all blown up about it. In the next breath he said it didn't apply in my case, and walked himself off!

DAVID. The fellow has more sense than I gave him credit for.

CLAUDIA. But doesn't it occur to you, if I'm good enough for you to be in love with, I'm good enough for other men to be in love with?

DAVID. Not necessarily. I'm just easy to please. You say yourself you're not beautiful. God knows, you're not bright; you've got no sex appeal, and yet I'm a simple fellow; you're all the woman I want.

CLAUDIA [*tensely*]. But if nobody else wants me, how long will you want me?

DAVID [*pulling her down to sofa*]. That's how long— [*Grinds it out against her lips in a passionate kiss*]

CLAUDIA [*emerging for air. Enchanted*]. You make me feel like a bad woman!

DAVID. All good wives should feel like bad women. [*Turns to checkbook*] Now come on, let's get this finished and go to bed.

CLAUDIA [*desperately*]. But you don't get my point!

DAVID. I get your point. [*Gives her a pile of checks*]

CLAUDIA. Wait a minute— [*Crosses to table for pickle*]

DAVID. You didn't find my scraper while I was gone? . . .

CLAUDIA. If you mention that pipe scraper again, I'll scream. Are they so expensive?

DAVID. That one cost a quarter.

CLAUDIA. A quarter. And you make my life miserable for a quarter. I'll buy you a new one.

DAVID. I don't want a new one. I want that one. I've had it for years— Read those checks off to me.

CLAUDIA [*through a mouthful of pickle*]. Five dollars to Cash, on the fourteenth.

DAVID [*crisply*]. Number and amount, please.

CLAUDIA. Oh—Number 249, five dollars— Has Julia got sex?

DAVID. In her head. Go on.

CLAUDIA. That's probably the most refined place for it. Want a bite of pickle?

DAVID. No. Go on, will you? I don't want to be at this all night.

CLAUDIA. Oh, just a little bite. Has Bertha got sex?

DAVID. Ask Fritz. [*Takes huge bite of pickle*] That's not a very good pickle—no more. [*Waves it away*]

CLAUDIA [*observing the dent in it*]. You weren't going to get asked to have any more. Number 261—a dollar-twenty to White Wash Laundry. Number 246—a hundred dollars to Bicker and Shore. Can a person be very spiritual and still have quite a lot of sex?

DAVID [*turning pages back and forth*]. It's been known to happen. What was that last check?

CLAUDIA. A hundred dollars for the lime spreader.

DAVID [*triumphant at long last*]. Ah-ha! You forgot to enter it. There's your mistake, you cluck!

CLAUDIA [*stricken*]. Oh, no, I couldn't have.

DAVID [*giving her the book*]. Then find it, my love.

CLAUDIA. Don't love me. It must be here. [*Shuffles nervously through the pages*]

DAVID [*brutally*]. Stop wasting your time. It isn't. [*Shoves vouchers at her*] Come on, let's go up.

CLAUDIA. But, David, wait a minute; this is terrible. I'm short—I'll have to have more money to get through the month—

DAVID. Ouch!

CLAUDIA [*without rancor*]. Are we strapped again?

DAVID. Ever hear of the word "depression"?

CLAUDIA. Yes, but we weren't married, so it didn't depress me. [*Meditatively*] David, sometimes I don't think you realize how much we spend on the place.

DAVID. I know to the last penny how much we spend on the place. Our total investment to date is exactly—

CLAUDIA. Don't tell me; let me guess—

DAVID. All right, guess.

CLAUDIA. At least—but at *least*—thirty thousand.

DAVID. Where'd I get thirty thousand? Dad only left me twenty.

CLAUDIA. Oh . . . I thought people always spent more.

DAVID [*simply*]. My God.

CLAUDIA [*blandly*]. My God, what?

DAVID [*patiently*]. We've put eighteen thousand in the place. Including furniture.

CLAUDIA [*in pleased astonishment*]. Is that all? I'd give you thirty this minute.

DAVID. It's a deal. [*They shake hands*]

CLAUDIA. What do we do with the extra two thousand? Put it in a mortgage?

DAVID. Oh, for *God's* sake!

CLAUDIA. What's the matter now?

DAVID. Nothing.

CLAUDIA. Don't look so long-suffering.

DAVID [*morosely*]. Jesus!

CLAUDIA. And stop taking the Lord's name in vain.

DAVID. He'll forgive me.

CLAUDIA. You still didn't tell me about the extra two thousand we didn't spend.

DAVID. We're not done yet. We've got work to do on the barns, and it takes so much an acre to reclaim your land.

CLAUDIA [*triumphantly*]. You see? That's just what I meant. A person could live at the Waldorf for what it costs to run a simple little farm.

DAVID. Who wants to live at the Waldorf?

CLAUDIA [*reasonably*]. Nobody, but if you're poor you have to put up with some discomforts.

DAVID [*after a pause*]. Claudia . . . [CLAUDIA *looks at him, arrested by the gravity of his tone*]

CLAUDIA. What?

DAVID. Answer me one thing. Truthfully.

CLAUDIA [*clear-eyed*]. Do I ever lie to you?

DAVID [*quietly*]. Not with your lips, you don't.

CLAUDIA. I know what you're going to ask me. Am I sorry we bought the place?

DAVID. No. I wasn't going to ask you that. Because I know you're not sorry. But are you completely happy here?

CLAUDIA [*low*]. Yes. Only sometimes I worry. Sometimes I wish—

DAVID [*finishing it for her*]. That Mother would live here with us. Then it would be perfect for you, wouldn't it?

CLAUDIA [*a little desperately*]. I'm not asking for it. I realize perfectly well how unfair it would be to you, David.

DAVID. Unfair to you, too, dear.

CLAUDIA [*unhappily*]. I know. It's not good. Some day when I'm an old woman, I'll develop a twitch in one eye and you'll hike me to a doctor and he'll say it's because I had an attachment to my mother. [*Moves restlessly to desk and picks up egg*] Life becomes complicated the minute you're born, doesn't it? An egg doesn't know how lucky it is.

DAVID. But an egg misses a lot of fun.

CLAUDIA [*sunily*]. That's right, an egg doesn't have you, an egg can't snuggle up to you in bed. Let's go up, quick! [*Starts to tear up vouchers in a businesslike way*]

DAVID [*on a horrified bawl*]. Stop that! What are you doing! You've got to keep your vouchers for three years!

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly; I wouldn't even keep a hat that long.

DAVID [*stiff with control*]. Have you been tearing them up right along?

CLAUDIA [*smugly*]. As soon as I balance, certainly. My side of the desk is as neat as a pin.

DAVID. You nitwit, we need them for income-tax deduction!

CLAUDIA. We can't afford an income tax with all our other expenses.

DAVID. Afford it or not, we have to pay it!

CLAUDIA. How much?

DAVID. Between seven and nine hundred. Depending on how many canceled checks you've thrown out!

CLAUDIA [*on a bleat*]. Seven to nine hundred? I forbid it!

DAVID. Good. I'll write to the government. My wife forbids me.

CLAUDIA. I just marvel how grown men can be so scared of a little tax. Why don't you just ignore the whole thing for once, and see what happens? [*The telephone rings, she breaks off*] That's us! I wonder who it is this hour of the night? [*Fear strikes her. She starts toward phone*] I hope there's nothing wrong. . . .

DAVID [*taunting but tender*]. Come back here. I know what's going through your head—you think Mother's been hurt in a railroad accident or something. [*Pulls her to him, locking her gaze with his own. His words carry an undertone of meaning*] Listen, darling. When are you going to stop being a Mamma-Baby? You're a married woman now. You've got a husband who loves you.

CLAUDIA [*abashed*]. I'm sorry, David. She's on my mind. I don't know why— [*Phone rings again*] Oh, please let me answer. [*Frees herself. Lifts receiver in trepidation*] Hello. Who? . . . Why, no, you must have the wrong number. [*Turns to DAVID*] Unless Fritz's last name's Kelemen? Is it?

DAVID. Yes.

CLAUDIA [*into phone*]. Just a minute. I'll call him. [*Goes to dining-room door*] Oh, Fritz! Telephone!

BERTHA [*faintly, off stage*]. I come, Mrs. Naughton. . .

CLAUDIA [*puzzled*]. That's funny. I thought they had no friends here. [*Crosses to DAVID*]

DAVID. Was it a man's voice?

CLAUDIA. Yes. Quite nice. Educated. [*BERTHA hurries in from dining room, putting on her apron*] Telephone, Bertha—Someone asking for Fritz.

BERTHA [*incredulously*]. Telephone? . . . I take it. Fritz is in the bathtub already. [*Moves to telephone. Handles it with heartbreaking clumsiness and palpitant apprehension*] Hello. . . . Yah. . . . Yah. . . . [*Her expression takes on an extreme agitation, and she breaks into a low, quick volley of Hungarian. Though one is unable to understand the conversation, it is apparent that the call is both unexpected and unwelcome. She turns from the telephone*

*in confused apology*] Please—I will tell Fritz—he will speak from the kitchen. [*Starts to hang up*]

CLAUDIA [*quickly*]. No, no, leave it off the hook, Bertha, or you'll disconnect. . . .

BERTHA [*flurried*]. I forget always. Excuse me. . . . [*Hurries off. For a long moment, neither CLAUDIA nor DAVID speaks*]

CLAUDIA [*in a small voice*]. Whoever it was, she was awfully upset.

DAVID [*shortly*]. Very.

CLAUDIA [*defensively*]. David, we've a right to know what's going on.

DAVID [*reluctantly*]. I suppose we have [*Registers conflict, as CLAUDIA moves to instrument and lifts receiver to her ear. She holds it for the barest instant, long enough to ascertain that FRITZ is on the other end, and then hangs up*]

CLAUDIA. Not really, we haven't. [*Afraid of appearing noble*] I couldn't understand them anyway—such jibberish. [*Walks back to DAVID*]

DAVID [*knowing better*]. You're a nice girl. I like you. [*Catches her to him and cups her face in his hands*]

CLAUDIA [*a little tremulously*]. That's not very exciting—just to like me.

DAVID [*softly*]. Don't you believe it. When you like the person that you love—that's marriage— [*Adds on a breath*] And it's exciting! [*Carries her to the stairs. Switches the room into darkness. Only the light from above shines down on them as the curtain slowly falls*]

## ACT II

TIME: *The following day.*

SCENE: *The same as Act I.*

[*A clear, washed autumn afternoon, with a lovely glimpse of meadow through the open terrace door. The stage is empty at Rise of Curtain. A flat dress box on sofa spills tissue paper and folds of silk. FRITZ, immaculate in white coat, opens dining-room doors, where DARUSCHKA, CLAUDIA and JULIA are discovered seated at table. They rise, ad-libbing, and enter.*]

CLAUDIA is dressed in a simple sweater and skirt. JULIA, distinctly Back-Bay, is expensively and conservatively groomed, her type favoring the long, tight sleeve and the high neckline. She is very thin and distinguished-looking, possibly thirty-five, with a deep well-bred voice, and only occasional flashes of warmth. DARUSCHKA is a successful opera star of Russian origin, essentially peasant, with china-blue eyes, pink skin and flaxen hair. She is given to sudden impulses of clowning, a little like an overgrown Newfoundland dog, and her speech is robust, joyful and chronically redundant. She has that inimitable thing—stellar quality—and uses it knowingly, making it her business to conceal a native shrewdness behind a disarming mask of artlessness.

JULIA [*on threshold*]. That was a delicious luncheon.

DARUSCHKA [*following with CLAUDIA, and hugging her ecstatically*]. Wonderful. Such milk! Oh, you are sweet! I like you! [*As FRITZ pauses R. of dining-room door*] I like you, too. You have a nice face. [*Pats his face*] So many people haven't got nice faces. My last man-and-wife didn't have a nice face. He was a thief.

CLAUDIA [*as FRITZ exits*]. Oh, we know all about Fritz. He was a whole year in some very big establishment upstate. [*Moving to box on table*] Oh, Julia, I simply adore the perfume, and the pajamas are gorgeous, too. Thanks loads.

JULIA. I'm glad you're not proud.

CLAUDIA [*happily*]. I don't mind hand-me-downs. [*To DARUSCHKA*] I was in luck. I inherited all of Julia's French panties after she was operated.

DARUSCHKA. What is the matter, Joolia, you do not wear panties any more?

JULIA. I'm simplifying my life.

DARUSCHKA. Very smart.

JULIA [*changing subject*]. Really, Claudia, I can't get over what you've done to the place. It's perfectly beautiful.

CLAUDIA. It was mostly David.

DARUSCHKA [*scornfully*]. David! Who is this David you talk about all the time—a husband? I have had four of them. They are just nothing. [*At terrace door, ecstatically*] Oh, it is even more beautiful outside than in! [*Turns back to room*] I tell you, this is the only life. I think I will buy a farm in the country, too!

JULIA. You'd go mad.

DARUSCHKA. Oh, but I am not going to live in it; I'm just going to have it! [*Crosses back to CLAUDIA*] Tell me, where can I find a nice farm?

CLAUDIA [*lightly*]. We'll sell you this one.

DARUSCHKA [*excitedly*]. Do you mean it? And can I have it furnished? Just as it is?

CLAUDIA. Even the pigs.

DARUSCHKA. I love pigs! Baaa. . . .

CLAUDIA. That's sheep.

DARUSCHKA [*carried away*]. Have we sheep too? Joolia, it is my perfect setting. . . . I might even adopt a baby. . . . Tell me, how much should I pay?

CLAUDIA. For the baby? You can get them for nothing.

DARUSCHKA. Very naughty. I am talking to Joolia—Joolia, for the property. Advise me. I am an ignoramus in such things!

JULIA. You have too much powder on.

DARUSCHKA [*bridling*]. So you think Daruschka is not in earnest? [*To CLAUDIA*] I will give you fifteen thousand dollars!

CLAUDIA [*enjoying it*]. Only fifteen thousand? For all that old paneling

and those lovely crooked floors? Why, those are the crookedest floors in Connecticut!

DARUSCHKA [*impressed but puzzled*]. And that is an advantage to be crooked in your floors?

CLAUDIA. Certainly. David's mad about those floors.

DARUSCHKA [*shrewdly*]. What price does *he* put on the place?

CLAUDIA. I offered him thirty thousand last night, and he said it was a deal.

DARUSCHKA [*confused as well as puzzled*]. Wait a minute! It is not what it is worth to you; it is what it is worth to me!

CLAUDIA [*reasonably*]. But it's our house, isn't it?

DARUSCHKA. She makes my head swim! [*The telephone rings*]

JULIA [*palpitant*]. That's for me. I'll take it upstairs.

CLAUDIA [*at phone*]. Hello. Oh, are you there, Bertha? [*Hangs up*] It's for Fritz. [*JULIA registers a let-down which is not lost on DARUSCHKA*]

DARUSCHKA [*slyly*]. That always kills me too, when my servants are more popular than I am. [*To CLAUDIA*] Now come. Get back to what we were talking about.

CLAUDIA [*her mind on FRITZ's call*]. Oh, yes. The farm.

DARUSCHKA. I will make it . . . [*Deliberates*] Twenty-five thousand!

CLAUDIA [*tired of the game*]. I'd rather keep it for thirty . . . [*Picks up pajamas*] Oh, I'm aching to try these on.

DARUSCHKA [*baited*]. Please! Stick to business! Have you a mortgage on the place?

CLAUDIA [*glibly*]. Loads of them.

JULIA [*arrested*]. Why, I thought David bought it outright!

CLAUDIA. Oh, those! No, we haven't any mortgages, but we have a beautiful brook.

DARUSCHKA [*enchanted*]. A brook! . . . Where is it?

CLAUDIA [*with a casual nod toward terrace*]. We keep it outdoors.

DARUSCHKA [*being all child, and loving it*]. I want to see it! But let us have it settled first. All right. I will give you thirty thousand. But I want the house and land completely furnished, and Fritz and Bertha and all the animals.

CLAUDIA [*laughing*]. Not the cat and dog—

DARUSCHKA [*magnanimously*]. Keep them. They don't agree with me. [*Crosses to terrace*] Ah, the air is like wine! [*She bursts into song*] God, I am in magnificent voice. This place agrees with my voice. Yes, I will buy it for my voice! [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*to JULIA*]. Are all artists crazy?

JULIA [*quizzically*]. Aren't you just a little crazy yourself? Do you intend to sell her the place?

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly.

JULIA. Don't tell me don't be silly. I know Daruschka.



CLAUDIA. I was joking.

JULIA. She wasn't.

CLAUDIA. But it's ridiculous! How could I ask thirty thousand when it only cost us eighteen?

JULIA. I don't know how you could, but you did.—Are you sure that's all you've put into it?

CLAUDIA. Positive. David said so last night.

JULIA. Without furniture.

CLAUDIA. No. With.

JULIA [*weighing it*]. That's something else again. [*Decisively*] Grab it.

CLAUDIA. Grab what?

JULIA. Daruschka's offer, you ninny.

CLAUDIA [*the possibility first dawning on her*]. But David doesn't want to sell the place; he loves it. Where would we go? What would we do?

JULIA. When you can get almost a hundred per cent profit in less than six months you don't ask so many questions.

CLAUDIA [*dreamily*]. Almost a hundred per cent profit is quite good, isn't it?

JULIA [*dryly*]. Not bad.

CLAUDIA [*coming to her senses*]. But it wouldn't be fair. The poor thing doesn't know what it's all about. She says herself she's an ignoramus.

JULIA. She's the smartest ignoramus you'll ever meet.

CLAUDIA. What on earth does she want with a farm, though?

JULIA. Background. Madame Daruschka and her favorite pig.

CLAUDIA [*slowly*]. I wonder what David *would* say?

JULIA [*amused*]. He'll probably say you're the smartest ignoramus he's ever met.

CLAUDIA [*tight-lipped*]. He thinks I haven't got sense enough to balance a checkbook.

JULIA [*with increasing relish*]. You haven't. But just the same, that woman's convinced she's wangled a magnificent bargain at thirty thousand.

CLAUDIA. But it *is* a bargain!

JULIA. I know, I know. You'd buy it yourself at thirty. . . .

CLAUDIA [*following her up*]. But if I found a going farm, beautifully furnished, remodeled by America's leading young architect . . .

JULIA [*retreating*]. Now don't you try to sell it to me, my dear. I've had my country experience.

CLAUDIA [*sinking down to sofa*]. But we don't feel that way about it, Julia; really, we don't. It's just that living in the country means you're so far away from everybody—

JULIA. Which is what everybody discovers sooner or later. Who do you see? Who do you talk to?

CLAUDIA. Each other. And the animals.

JULIA. Very stimulating.

CLAUDIA. It is. Animals can be much nicer than people.

JULIA. Better not sell her the place, if you're so in love with it.

CLAUDIA. But I want to . . . I didn't realize how much I wanted to.

JULIA. Darling, you're not making a great deal of sense.

CLAUDIA [*on a breath*]. I know . . . I'm all mixed up. [DARUSCHKA enters ebulliently from dining room]

DARUSCHKA. Listen, everybody! I have been a fool not to buy a farm in the country before!

JULIA. Where've you been?

DARUSCHKA [*panting with enthusiasm*]. All over the place! What a garden, what a kitchen! [*Wheeling on CLAUDIA*] I would like to move in right away, because I am going to Hollywood for all winter next week. How soon can you get out?

CLAUDIA [*pleading for sanity*]. You're only joking, aren't you?

DARUSCHKA. Joking? [*Crosses to table. Takes checkbook from handbag*] I will show you if I am joking. [*Writes out check*]

JULIA [*with vanishing tolerance*]. Now what are you doing?

DARUSCHKA. You will see what I am doing. . . . Also I would like to speak to your man-and-wife at once.

CLAUDIA [*panicky*]. Oh, no, don't.

DARUSCHKA [*with flat logic*]. Why not? You do not need a farmer if you have no farm.

CLAUDIA [*unsteadily*]. But they only just came. It might be a shock to them.

JULIA. It undoubtedly will.

DARUSCHKA [*thrusting check at CLAUDIA*]. Here! This deposit arranges everything. And my lawyer will call your husband on Monday.

CLAUDIA [*staring at it*]. Five hundred dollars? What do I do with it?

DARUSCHKA [*putting it in CLAUDIA's sweater pocket*]. When your husband comes home, you give it to him. He will know what to do with it. [CLAUDIA, dazed, crosses to desk]

JULIA. Now that you've bought everything in sight, Daruschka, do let's get started.

DARUSCHKA. No. I want to stay a little while. I want to get acquainted with my house. Oh, God! I never owned so many books in my life!

JULIA. Does it occur to you that you've got a concert tonight?

DARUSCHKA. Concert! Who cares about a concert—

JULIA. I might have plans of my own, darling.

DARUSCHKA. Let him wait! It is good for him.

CLAUDIA [*with her usual curiosity*]. Let who wait?

JULIA [*hastily*]. Nobody. Weren't you going to try on those pajamas, Claudia?

DARUSCHKA [*seizing on an excuse to linger*]. Yes, I want to see how they

look. A married woman, poof! . . . Straight up and down like a little stick. Maybe they will give you a shape, the pajamas.

JULIA [*smiling*]. They'll give you the potentiality of one, anyway.

CLAUDIA. You're treading on sensitive ground. I've always longed for a bust.

DARUSCHKA. Listen to her. It is a curse!

CLAUDIA. Curse or not, I don't know anyone who has sex appeal without one.

JULIA [*a little sharply*]. Don't be absurd.

DARUSCHKA [*as CLAUDIA starts upstairs with pajamas*]. Come back! Put these on! . . . [*Takes off her earrings*]

CLAUDIA. I never wore earrings in my life.

DARUSCHKA. It is time you began. And don't forget the perfume. What is your potentiality without perfume? [*Calls after her*] And do something nice with your hair, for God's sake!

JULIA [*biting her lips with annoyance*]. I wish you'd be a little more discreet with my affairs, Daruschka.

DARUSCHKA. Ach. You are old-fashioned. You should shout it from the housetops.

JULIA. Not this housetop. Claudia's in love with her husband. She doesn't know other men exist.

DARUSCHKA. Poor child!

JULIA [*tensely*]. Just the same, it's pretty sweet while it lasts.

DARUSCHKA. But it doesn't last.

JULIA. It lasted with me for ten years.

DARUSCHKA. Listen. You know what's the matter with you? You are still in love with Hartley. That is the trouble with husbands. They are so damn legal. It ruins everything.

JULIA. Maybe you're right.

DARUSCHKA. Oh, don't be so nervous. The first weekend is always the hardest. Next time you will think nothing of it. Just a few drops in the bucket.

JULIA. I'm not too sure of that. . . . I wonder where our wraps are.

DARUSCHKA. Fritz took them. I will ring for him. I want to look at him again, now that he belongs to me. [*Crosses to terrace*] This view! Those meadows! [*Peers out*] Oh, what do you think? A car just drove up. And it is David. . . . He is getting out. He is going in the garage! Look. He has turned back again. I can see his face. He is handsome! And tall! [*Waves*] Yoo-hoo! [*To JULIA*] He thinks I am a crazy woman! [*Calls*] Hurry up! Come in quick; I have just bought your house! [*To JULIA*] He is *very* handsome.

JULIA [*living in the past*]. Hartley used to look just like him.

DARUSCHKA. Never in a million years.

JULIA. Yes, he did. [FRITZ *enters from dining room*] Oh, Fritz, will you bring our wraps? [FRITZ *exits dining room*]

DARUSCHKA [*shouting*]. Helloo!

VOICE [*off stage*]. Helloo! [JERRY SEYMOUR *appears at terrace door*. JULIA *registers with raised brows*]

DARUSCHKA [*oblivious of her mistake*]. I do not blame Claudia for being madly in love with you. I could fall in love with you myself. Come in, come in. [FRITZ *enters from dining room with DARUSCHKA's and JULIA's wraps*. JERRY *gapes as he notes the white serving jacket*]

DARUSCHKA [*misreading his astonishment*]. You are surprised you have no house any more? You are surprised I bought it?

JERRY. You could knock me over with the proverbial feather. [*Recovers himself*] I found your jack on the running board of my car last night, Fritz. I left it in the garage on the shelf.

FRITZ. Thank you, sir. I was looking for it. [*Exits*]

DARUSCHKA [*with a nod to JULIA*]. Introduce me to the poor man. He doesn't seem to know who I am.

JERRY [*unaware of JULIA, who has withdrawn to fireplace to await developments*]. You underestimate your fame, Madame Daruschka.

DARUSCHKA. Listen to him; he is delightful! But just the same you are a terr'ble liar; you knew I was coming—I shall call you David, no?

JERRY. I've always been very fond of the name of David.

JULIA [*deciding he has gone far enough*]. I'm Claudia's sister-in-law, Julia Naughton. You're Jerry Seymoure. I met you at the Riddles' a few weeks ago.

JERRY [*not at all disconcerted*]. But of course! [*Shakes hands*]

JULIA. I didn't know you lived up here.

JERRY. I don't. I've rented a little weekend shack to finish a novel.

DARUSCHKA [*outraged*]. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Somebody is making a fool of me! Why did you pass yourself off as Claudia's husband?

JERRY. I didn't. You jumped to conclusions. [CLAUDIA *appears on stairs, completely transformed into a seductive and glamorous young woman*] As a matter of fact, I jumped to a few myself. Hello! [*Crosses to CLAUDIA, an enigmatic smile playing around his lips. His stare is at once impudent and accusing*]

CLAUDIA [*a little confused*]. Hello, I didn't expect you.

DARUSCHKA [*not missing a trick*]. That is perfectly obvious! Never mind, we were just going. [*To JULIA*] You were telling me fairy stories. [*To CLAUDIA*] You little up-and-down stick. [*Adds with a significant gesture*] With shape!

JULIA [*with mingled reactions*]. Will you ask Fritz to see if the chauffeur's outside, Claudia?

DARUSCHKA [*to JERRY*]. You see if he is still there. You, you.

JERRY. *With pleasure. [Wickedly]* How long would you like me to be gone?

DARUSCHKA [*cornered*]. Tsch! [*As he exits through hallway*] Mark you. He knows all the entrances and exits.

CLAUDIA [*on whom the innuendoes have been lost*]. What is all this?

DARUSCHKA. Innocent. . . . Bust or no bust, you have danced circles around us! Come no, confess.

CLAUDIA. I don't know what you're talking about.

DARUSCHKA [*with her divine lewdness*]. She doesn't know what we are talking about!

JULIA. It does look strange, darling. He doesn't write very good novels, but he's extremely attractive. Why didn't you tell us about him?

CLAUDIA. Because I don't even know him!

DARUSCHKA. He was here last night. I heard it with my own ears.

CLAUDIA. He had a flat tire.

DARUSCHKA. Flat tire—flat tire!

CLAUDIA. But it's true!

DARUSCHKA. Now, now, you are too clever to expect me to swallow that!

JULIA. Come along, Daruschka, you're on the wrong track. Claudia isn't built for intrigue.

CLAUDIA [*a little piqued*]. You see? Julia doesn't believe I'm capable of having an affair.

JULIA [*simply, but with a volume of rich implication*]. Why should you?

DARUSCHKA. Why shouldn't she? [JERRY reappears at terrace door]

JERRY. The chauffeur's waiting out in front. May I come back?

DARUSCHKA. Yes. I have found out all I want to know. [*Indicating*

CLAUDIA] Little fox. [*To JERRY*] You do not like that I call her little fox?

JERRY. On the contrary, I love that you call her little fox.

JULIA. Put on your coat, Daruschka, do let's get started.

DARUSCHKA. Somebody should have warned me about her before I bought her house.

JERRY. Somebody should have warned me, too.

DARUSCHKA [*over her shoulder as JERRY helps her with her coat*]. I shall be your neighbor. Are you pleased?

JERRY. Enchanted.

JULIA. Drop in for cocktails sometime when you're in town, Mr. Seymoure.

JERRY. I shall indeed.

JULIA [*to CLAUDIA*]. Good-bye, dear. Be good. [*Kisses her lightly and exits*]

DARUSCHKA [*thumping her shoulder*]. Do not listen to her! [*A sudden thought occurs to her*] Wait! What month were you born?

CLAUDIA. December. Why?

DARUSCHKA. The sign of the goat. I knew it, I knew it! We are just alike. All feelings and impulses! [*Whcels to JERRY*] What month were you born?

JERRY [*briefly*]. Taurus.

DARUSCHKA. The sign of the bull! It is perfect! [*Bursts into Toreador song*]

JULIA [*reappearing*]. Daruschka, you terrible woman, will you come! [*Drags her off by main force*]

CLAUDIA [*to cover an awkward moment*]. She's quite a character, if you can live through it.

JERRY [*pushing aside small talk*]. You're quite a character yourself.—Why did you make a monkey out of me last night? [*Glares at her furiously*]

CLAUDIA [*wide-eyed*]. I made a monkey out of you?

JERRY. You told me you were married to Fritz!

CLAUDIA [*sputtering*]. I didn't tell you any such thing.

JERRY. All right then, you looked like Fritz's wife. He didn't have his white coat on, and you wore a bungalow apron!

CLAUDIA. You're crazy. I had on my good green wool!

JERRY. Your good green wool gave the impression of a bungalow apron.

CLAUDIA [*relaxing to sofa, every inch the siren*]. That was merely the other side of my potentiality.

JERRY [*swallowing*]. I've been robbed.

CLAUDIA. Robbed how?

JERRY. Just robbed. [*Leans over back of sofa*]. This is by far the more enchanting side of your potentiality. It smells like all the flowers in the universe. [*Bends to kiss her*]

CLAUDIA. Hey! Don't do that. [*Rises*]

JERRY. What's the matter?

CLAUDIA [*brusquely*]. I don't like it.

JERRY. You lie in your teeth.

CLAUDIA. Let me go!

JERRY [*follows her*]. You're tantalizing . . .

CLAUDIA [*mollified and agreeably astonished*]. Tantalizing?

JERRY. And you're desirable. Utterly desirable.

CLAUDIA [*in sudden misgiving*]. And just what—

JERRY [*interrupting*]. Just what you think it means.

CLAUDIA. Oh. [*Reaches for something else to talk about*]

JERRY [*forestalling her again*]. And I don't want a glass of milk.

CLAUDIA [*surprised*]. How did you know I was going to ask you that?

JERRY. You had that look.

CLAUDIA [*hopefully*]. Are you sure you wouldn't like some?

JERRY [*firmly*]. I was never surer of anything in my life. . . . It's a lovely day. Run get a wrap. My car's outside.

CLAUDIA [*debating it*]. In the middle of the afternoon?

JERRY. What better time?

CLAUDIA [*deciding against it*]. I don't think so. David'll be home any minute. We can all three go for a nice long ride some evening.

JERRY. Hey!

CLAUDIA. What's the matter?

JERRY [*hoarsely*]. I don't like it.

CLAUDIA [*soliciously*]. Why, your forehead's perspiring!

JERRY. I'm not surprised.

CLAUDIA [*obligingly*]. I'll open a window.

JERRY. That won't help.

CLAUDIA [*abruptly*]. You know, I'm almost tempted to go for that ride. It might do David good to come home and find me gone.

JERRY [*weighing the implications a little dubiously*]. Is he the jealous type?

CLAUDIA [*bitterly*]. I wish he were.

JERRY [*relieved*]. Oh. So he's not in love with you.

CLAUDIA. He is! [*Adds lamely*] But differently. [*Moodily*] He likes my spirit.

JERRY [*putting the wrong two together*]. Good God! He sounds like a—  
[*Finds it difficult to vocalize*]

CLAUDIA [*abstractedly*]. First-rate pansy? . . . [JERRY *stares at her in amazement*. CLAUDIA *smiles pleasantly*] That's what he called you last night.

JERRY [*grimly*]. Oh, he did, did he? Let's go.

CLAUDIA. I can't. My mother's coming.

JERRY [*on a bleat*]. Have you got a mother, too?

CLAUDIA. Haven't you?

JERRY. I suppose so. I don't see her more than once a year.

CLAUDIA. You don't?

JERRY. Why should I?

CLAUDIA [*incredulously*]. Don't you want to?

JERRY. Not particularly.

CLAUDIA. Don't you *like* her?

JERRY. Not particularly.

CLAUDIA [*shocked*]. That's abnormal. Do you feel the same toward your father?

JERRY. My father's dead. [*A little tensely*] He was a real person.

CLAUDIA [*sagely*]. So that's what's wrong with you.

JERRY. What?

CLAUDIA. You've got a father image.

JERRY. A what?

CLAUDIA. A father image. And that's just as bad as a mother image. You know, it's apt to upset your whole sex life if you're not careful.

JERRY. There's nothing the matter with my sex life! [*Catches her to him, and proves it with a passionate kiss*]

CLAUDIA [*after a startled moment*]. Well, that's a funny business . . .

JERRY. Don't be angry.

CLAUDIA. I'm not. [*A little dazed*] Would you mind doing it again, please?

JERRY [*who has expected a rebuff*]. Why? [*Eyes her distrustfully*]

CLAUDIA. Because the most wonderful feeling shot right through me. . . .

JERRY [*completely enchanted, draws her to him again*]. You uninhibited darling!

CLAUDIA [*warding him off fastidiously*]. Not too much of a one, please.

JERRY [*slightly disgruntled*]. You'll take what you get and like it! [DAVID whistles—off stage. CLAUDIA hears it]

CLAUDIA [*attempting to pull away*]. Wait a minute—

JERRY [*with male dominance*]. I'll wait for nothing.

CLAUDIA [*crisply*]. Don't be silly. I have to say hello to David. . . . [DAVID enters from front door. The smile fades from his face. He makes no sound. Only the waxy look around his nostrils and his utter stillness reveal that his world is toppling. JERRY wheels. His arms drop to his side. CLAUDIA moves toward DAVID. She is a little self-conscious, but shows neither guilt nor guile] Hello, dear! [To JERRY] This is my husband. I don't know your last name. . . .

JERRY [*over a closing throat*]. Seymoure.

CLAUDIA [*to DAVID*]. This is Mr. Seymoure, David— [Breaks off apprehensively] You're white as a ghost. Is anything wrong?

DAVID [*pushing her aside. His eyes on JERRY*]. Get out.

CLAUDIA [*smartly*]. I won't get out. Why should I? [Her fears focusing] Why didn't Manma come?

DAVID [*in the same ominous tone*]. Get out! [Moves her forcibly from his path]

JERRY [*not enjoying any of it*]. Hold on a minute; there's another side to this story—

CLAUDIA [*impatiently*]. David, for Heaven's sake, stop wiggling your nostrils like that; you look silly!

DAVID [*with a control that augurs no good*]. Do you want to go by yourself, or do you want me to carry you?

CLAUDIA [*drawing herself up with offended dignity*]. Please.

DAVID [*his fingers brutal against her arm*]. I'll give you just five seconds to go upstairs and take off that masquerade costume! [Adds in breaking fury] And wash that stuff off your face!

CLAUDIA [*stunned and affronted*]. How dare you talk to me like that! [The enormity of the breach sweeps over her] In front of a perfect stranger, too! I'll never forgive you until you beg my pardon! [She flies up to her room, leaving them to face a completely unexpected reversal of the situation—herself in the role of the outraged wife, and DAVID in the position of erring husband. For a moment, there is a small, fleet silence, while DAVID seeks to readjust himself. It serves to lower their emotions an octave toward the normal. JERRY is the first to find his voice]



JERRY. Incredible. You come in and find her in the arms of another man, and you should beg her pardon. [*Curiosity surmounting strain*] Look here, are you going to?

DAVID [*steadily*]. I might. After I get to the bottom of this.

JERRY [*with a kind of astonished reverence*]. That's love. [*Hastily, as DAVID advances*] You don't have to throw me out. I'm going.

DAVID. Not so quickly. [*Makes a move to block his path*]

JERRY [*reasonable, but agitated*]. Now hold on a minute. I don't blame you for wanting to take a crack at me, but in the name of justice, listen to my side of it.—[*For an instant "his side of it" eludes him, but he manages to continue with mounting indignation*] By God, I ought to take a crack at you! You oughtn't to let her loose without a keeper. She's a menace to a man's sanity. I don't think she even knows what it's all about. . . .

DAVID [*fists clenched*]. She doesn't. And if you weren't such a bastard you'd have realized it.

JERRY [*hoarsely*]. But how was I to know? She acts like she does, she talks like she does— She's led me one hell of a dance. I'm shot. [*Sinks to a chair*] Believe me, I'm the nearest thing to mopping my forehead I've ever been in my life. And by God, I'm going to do it! [*Takes out his handkerchief and mops*]

DAVID [*fists slowly unclenching*]. I know that feeling.

JERRY [*elliptically*]. I suppose you thought I was the—same sort I thought you were?

DAVID [*shortly*]. More or less.

JERRY. Extraordinary, how she did it.

DAVID. Want a drink?

JERRY [*looks up as if he hadn't heard correctly*]. Thank you. [*Adds in deep gratitude*] Straight. [DAVID pours drinks, in silence]

JERRY. Here's— [*Steps disconcerted and gulps drink. Then, stripped of his usual glibness, he goes on in hesitant embarrassment*] Please don't misunderstand me. But are you sure she doesn't know what it's all about?

DAVID [*putting down his glass, holding JERRY's eyes*]. Why?

JERRY [*hedging; sorry he's brought it up*]. No reason. Except that she— [*Blurts it out*] Well, she seemed to like it, and wanted me to kiss her again. [*Inarticulately*] She's such a damn sweet kid—I thought you ought to know.

DAVID [*muted*]. Thanks.

JERRY. Perhaps it was none of my business.

DAVID [*with difficulty*]. It wasn't. But—thanks just the same. [BERTHA enters from dining room in her commodious white apron]

BERTHA. Oh, excuse me, please. The dry cleaner is here. Has Mrs. Naughton anything for him?

DAVID [*holding himself under control*]. Tell the dry cleaner to come back Monday. [As BERTHA turns, CLAUDIA runs downstairs, hastily zipping up the placket of the skirt she has previously worn. Her hair has been loosed

from the formal headdress and once more hangs with childish simplicity about her ears. She is crisp and direct, with a barb in her words. Carries gray blouse]

CLAUDIA. Nothing of the kind. It happens to be important if nobody objects. [*Throws DAVID a frigid glance as she stalks across to dining room*] I sent out my gray blouse with one spot and it comes back with two! [*Exits, leaving heavy silence behind her*]

JERRY [*breaking it with a croak of disbelief*]. Her gray blouse . . . [*Shakes his head*] Well, I'll be on my way.

DAVID [*out of the unspoken conflict in his soul*]. I might be talking to you again one of these days.

JERRY [*reading between the lines. Awkwardly*]. I say, that makes me feel pretty rotten. Forget what I said, won't you? I just thought you ought to know—anything there was to know—because—well, you've been damned decent about all this—

CLAUDIA [*returning to hear end of speech*]. Why don't you two kiss each other?

JERRY. I could do a lot worse. And so could you, young lady.

CLAUDIA. I resent that remark. And I don't like to be called 'young lady' in that tone of voice.

JERRY [*with real sweetness*]. I'm sorry. I'm sorry about a lot of things. Forgive me. Both of you. [*Takes her hand in a brief farewell*] Au 'voir. [*Turns at door with a faint smile*] Oh, and one more thing. Your good green wool. Have it copied in several shades. It's definitely your own particular style—and charming! [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*to DAVID, in blazing accusation*]. You poisoned his mind against me! Everything was going beautifully, until you spoiled it all.

DAVID [*taking her by the shoulders*]. What was going beautifully?

CLAUDIA [*pulling away from him*]. Don't touch me. I'm terribly hurt, the way you've acted.

DAVID [*levelly*]. How do you think I feel?

CLAUDIA [*tears choking her*]. I didn't say one single nasty word to you!

DAVID [*with much restrained emotion*]. No. You just smashed my world to pieces.—Why did you let him kiss you, Claudia?

CLAUDIA. I didn't let him. He did it of his own accord. [*Like a hurt child*] Hard as that may be for you to understand.

DAVID [*gently*]. It isn't hard for me to understand.

CLAUDIA [*a little wistfully*]. Honestly, isn't it?

DAVID [*wooing her as a woman*]. No. You're young—you're lovely—

CLAUDIA [*on a breath*]. Why didn't you ever tell me that before?

DAVID. Was it necessary?

CLAUDIA. Yes. It was.

DAVID [*humbly*]. Maybe you're right.

CLAUDIA [*softly*]. It does things for you, when a man thinks you're desirable.

DAVID. Is that what he called you?

CLAUDIA [*satisfied at long last*]. You're jealous!

DAVID. What do you expect me to be?

CLAUDIA. Then why on earth didn't you do things about it? Knock him down at least!

DAVID. Claudia, listen to me. This is no game. [*Pulls her down on sofa*] Don't you know you could have smashed something very fine and beautiful between us?

CLAUDIA. Smashed it? Why, I built it up! I only did it for your sake.

DAVID [*slowly*]. I think you really believe that.

CLAUDIA. But it's no fun to be in love with a woman no other man would give house room to! Oh, David, you should have seen me. Once I got going, I simply *sizzled*!

DAVID. Suppose you tell me about it. [*Finding it hard*] Did you—like it when he kissed you?

CLAUDIA [*enthusiastically*]. The most wonderful feeling shot clear through me, from my eyebrows to my toes. And then what do you think happened?

DAVID [*the knife twisting in him*]. I don't know.

CLAUDIA. Instead of the feeling going to Jerry, it shot right back to *you*. [*DAVID looks at her. She seems a little lost*] You don't get it.

DAVID [*starkly*]. No. I don't get it.

CLAUDIA [*urgently*]. But it's perfectly clear! Kissing Jerry made me more in love with you. I even asked him to kiss me again, to make sure. And the same thing happened.

DAVID. What same thing?

CLAUDIA [*with all her heart*]. I was crazy about you. . . . Can't you understand the way it worked?

DAVID [*after a moment*]. Come to think of it—it happened to me once like that, too.

CLAUDIA [*her heart stopping*] Oh.

DAVID [*very simply*]. We'd been married about six months. In the subway, one evening, there was a girl sitting opposite . . .

CLAUDIA. And? . . .

DAVID. She was very pretty.

CLAUDIA. Oh.

DAVID. I went home loving you more than ever.

CLAUDIA. How pretty was she, David?

DAVID. It didn't matter.

CLAUDIA. And you never saw her again?

DAVID. No.

CLAUDIA. You never wanted to see her again?

DAVID. There wasn't any reason for me to want to. [*Making love to her*] Can't you understand the way that worked?

CLAUDIA [*over a tight throat*]. It's not easy.

DAVID. Nothing about love is easy.

CLAUDIA [*wonderingly*]. And yet it seems so easy when you first get married. But what it really is—marriage, I mean—is a sort of rebirth of two people.

DAVID [*gravely*]. That's it.

CLAUDIA. Getting born once is hard enough. Getting born twice is a terrible job.

DAVID [*turns her toward him*]. Sometimes it's hell.

CLAUDIA [*seeing it in his eyes*]. I must have hurt you, David.

DAVID. We'll both be hurt a little—before we finish.

CLAUDIA [*glimpsing the future*]. I'll be hurt more, because I'm so possessive. [*Her mood changes*] You might as well know it, I'm not noble. I'd cut up all over the place if you ever so much as looked at another woman!

DAVID [*his mood held*]. How do you think I felt when I walked in here this afternoon?

CLAUDIA. But that was different; I was trying an experiment. And it just occurs to me—if every time I kiss another man, it makes me more in love with my own husband, I can really go places, can't I?

DAVID [*all male*]. You can not—

CLAUDIA [*all female*]. I certainly can— [*FRITZ enters, then draws back diffidently*]

FRITZ. Excuse me. I heard the gentleman go, but I did not know you were busy. . . . [*They separate. Their moment is broken. FRITZ stands hesitant and a little embarrassed*]

DAVID. That's all right, Fritz. Come in.

FRITZ. I need to ask a favor. If you are satisfied with us, could we perhaps have—our wages for half the month in advance? Very urgently, we need the money. . . .

DAVID. I don't see why not.

FRITZ. You are very kind.

DAVID [*moving toward desk*]. Any particular hurry?

FRITZ. I will have to have it before evening. . . .

DAVID. I'll make out a check later and leave it on the desk for you.

FRITZ. Thank you, thank you. It will not happen again. [*Exits*]

CLAUDIA [*reluctantly*]. David, don't you think that under the circumstances you should have asked him what he needs the money for? Maybe he's in trouble.

DAVID. What makes you say so?

CLAUDIA. Because that same voice telephoned again this afternoon. Bertha was waiting for the call at the kitchen extension.

DAVID. He might be in a jam at that. I'll talk to him when I give him the check.—Damn, I should have asked him about Majesty.

CLAUDIA. I did. He took her this morning. He said the bull was fine. Or Majesty was fine—I forget which.

DAVID. In this business they both have to be fine. [*The telephone rings. He starts toward it*]

CLAUDIA. That's not us. [*Quick to sense his anxiety*] Are you expecting a call?

DAVID. Yes.

CLAUDIA. Who? [*With an attempt at levity*] The girl in the subway?

DAVID. Didn't you know I was leading a double life?

CLAUDIA. Stop teasing. [*Apprehensively*] I hate it when your jawbone gets all tight like that. David, what's the matter? You're not still upset about Jerry?

DAVID. Do you think I can forget it—one-two-three?

CLAUDIA. I'd feel pretty griped if you did. But something else is worrying you. What's the call you're waiting for?

DAVID [*sitting down in armchair*]. A client.

CLAUDIA [*on floor beside him*]. What kind of a client?

DAVID. Chocolate and vanilla.

CLAUDIA. Don't be silly. I mean, is he important?

DAVID. Very. I might have to go back to town tonight.

CLAUDIA [*devastated*]. On a weekend? Why didn't you tell me before?

DAVID. Fat chance you gave me to tell you anything before.

CLAUDIA. Well, if you do have to go in, I'll go too. [*Suddenly*] Unless Mamma's coming out later. Is she? Why didn't she come with you?

DAVID. Did it ever occur to you to ask one question at a time?

CLAUDIA. No. Why should I? Why didn't she?

DAVID. She wasn't finished at the doctor's.

CLAUDIA [*catching him up*]. Doctor's?

DAVID [*hastily*]. I mean the dentist's.

CLAUDIA. What'd you say "doctor" for? [*Rises in sudden fear*]

DAVID [*evasively*]. A dentist's a doctor, isn't he? Why do you want to go?

CLAUDIA. To keep you company.

DAVID. Come clean. . . .

CLAUDIA [*confessing*]. I thought I could drop in and see her.

DAVID. You saw her last night.

CLAUDIA. But, David, it's so hard to live all alone. Especially on Sundays.

DAVID. What's wrong with Sundays?

CLAUDIA [*falteringly*]. If you're with someone you love it can be a wonderful day. But if you're all alone, in a little kitchenette, with one cooked chop on a plate—

DAVID. Mother likes chops. And she likes being by herself.

CLAUDIA. Like fun she likes it! The last time I was in town I walked in and found her sitting in a chair; not even listening to the radio.

DAVID. Well, I often sit in a chair without listening to the radio.

CLAUDIA. But when you sit still out of happiness—it's different.

DAVID [*his voice deepening*]. Mother's had a lot of happiness, too, dear. And if she's a little lonely now—well, maybe loneliness is a lesson we all have to learn.

CLAUDIA. Don't say that!

DAVID. But it's true. You might as well face it. You're going to lose one of us first. Mother or me. Take your choice.

CLAUDIA [*passionately*]. Neither!

DAVID. Look, darling; when are you going to start real work on this marriage of ours? Grow up to be a big girl?

CLAUDIA [*low*]. Is it too much to ask for everything to be just the way it is now—always?

DAVID [*quietly*]. Yes, dear. It's too much to ask. Life won't give it to you.

CLAUDIA [*half tearfully*]. How did we get on this subject anyway? . . . Kiss me. Hold me tight. [DAVID *holds her close, but his eyes, looking off into space, are grave. With effort he lifts himself from the sober thoughts which claim him*]

DAVID [*sniffing*]. Where'd you get that stink?

CLAUDIA. It's thirty dollars a bottle! . . . Julia. Don't you like it? [DAVID *sniffs again, reluctant to admit that the fragrance stirs him*]

DAVID. You smell like a little tart. [*He kisses her, displacing her hair a little*]

CLAUDIA. She brought me the pajamas, too.

DAVID. She can take them back. [*Glimpses the earrings and yanks them off*] And get a credit check on these, while you're about it.

CLAUDIA [*dismayed*]. Oh heavens! I forgot to give them back to Daruschka. [*Suddenly remembers she sold the farm and stops aghast, hand on pocket of sweater*] Daruschka. . . .

DAVID. What's the matter?

CLAUDIA [*swallowing*]. I forgot to tell you something. Can you stand a surprise?

DAVID. Lady, living with you, I've had plenty of practice.

CLAUDIA. You'd better sit down, anyway. [*Leads him to sofa*]

DAVID [*distrustfully*]. What now?

CLAUDIA [*in a small voice*]. Nothing. Except I sold the farm.

DAVID [*affably*]. What farm?

CLAUDIA. This farm. We have to move out right away. Do you mind?

DAVID [*very affably*]. Not at all.

CLAUDIA [*sensing difficulties*]. You don't believe me! [*Shakes him*] David, I did. [*Sits down close to him*]

DAVID. What's the joke?

CLAUDIA [*feverishly*]. It isn't a joke. She's in dead earnest! Honestly.

DAVID. Who?

CLAUDIA. Daruschka! Don't you remember she was coming to lunch?

DAVID [*with sudden weariness*]. Come on, Claudia, stop clowning. I've had the damnedest day. Let me go up and get a tub— [*Attempts to rise*]

CLAUDIA. Don't shake me off like a bag of flour! And I'm not clowning. [*Pushes him back, pouring out the whole story in a single breath*] She wants to buy everything, even the furnishings and the livestock—but we can always get new furniture, and after all, what could we do with a cow in New York— And don't interrupt, what do you think she's paying—you can't guess. Thirty thousand dollars!

DAVID. Don't be an ass. The woman's taking you for a ride.

CLAUDIA. Ask Julia.

DAVID. I don't have to ask Julia. People don't come to lunch and buy a farm.

CLAUDIA [*breathlessly*]. Daruschka isn't people, she's an artist, and artists do things like that! Her lawyer's calling you on Monday.

DAVID [*tolerantly*]. All right, we'll wait until he calls. Now let me go up— [*Starts to rise again*]

CLAUDIA. Oh, stop treating me like a half-wit! Won't you ever learn a lesson? First you thought I had no sex, and look what I did to a perfectly strange man! You thought I couldn't even balance a checkbook, and I've made you almost a hundred per cent profit on an investment! The trouble with you is, you don't appreciate me, that's the whole thing in a nutshell.

DAVID [*dryly*]. Nutshell is right—

CLAUDIA. There you go.

DAVID. But I tell you, it's a lot of nonsense! You'll never hear from her again.

CLAUDIA. Does this look like we'll never hear from her again? [*Withdraws check from pocket and gives it to him. For a long moment, he does not speak. When he does, his voice is stripped to emptiness*]

DAVID. Do you actually want to sell her the place, Claudia?

CLAUDIA [*being very rational*]. Who wouldn't, at a profit of twelve thousand dollars? Julia says to grab it.

DAVID. I'll thank Julia to mind her own business. I'm trying to find out what's going on in your head, not hers.

CLAUDIA. I'm just being practical. Twelve thousand dollars is as much as you earn in a whole year.

DAVID. But where do we go from here?

CLAUDIA. That's simple. To a hotel for a week or two, until we find an apartment. And just think, the janitor will worry about the garbage.

DAVID [*slowly*]. But I thought you loved this house. I thought you loved being close to the land.

CLAUDIA. I did. I do. But aren't we a little young to bury ourselves way out in the country?

DAVID. I didn't think it was being buried.

CLAUDIA. That's because you're in town all day. But until Fritz and Bertha's coming, I just sat up here having help trouble.

DAVID [*a little stunned*]. You should have told me, dear. Unless two people want the same thing, it's no go, and all the pretending in the world won't make it a go.

CLAUDIA. But, David, I really have adored it.

DAVID [*gently*]. Why don't you tell me the truth about it, dear?

CLAUDIA [*miserably*]. I have.

DAVID. No, you haven't. You've given me every reason but the real one. You want to be near Mother, is that it?

CLAUDIA. But, David, you just can't wave away twelve thousand dollars. It isn't *sensible*!

DAVID. No, I suppose not.

CLAUDIA. Don't you think we ought to be sensible? [DAVID *nods agreement*]

CLAUDIA [*continuing to be rational*]. It'll pay for our income tax for as long as we live. Isn't that something?

DAVID. You bet.

CLAUDIA [*in conflict*]. Only you're not happy about it, are you?

DAVID [*rising to go upstairs*]. I've got to get used to the idea of being a millionaire.

CLAUDIA [*on a little wail*]. You're disappointed in me. [*Follows him*] You . . . love me, but you don't like me.

DAVID [*pausing*]. Silly. [*Presses her nose like a button, and again turns toward stairs. CLAUDIA stares after him, at a loss to re-establish some subtle bond that has been broken between them. On a sudden inspiration, she upturns a small vase on table, and holds something in her hand behind her back*]

CLAUDIA. David. Wait. I have something for you.

DAVID. Give it to me later.

CLAUDIA. No, now. Which hand?

DAVID [*his nerves ragged*]. Please, Claudia. Enough is enough. I'm tired, and I don't feel like being cute.

CLAUDIA [*opens her hand*]. Look.

DAVID [*on a note of tender reunion, the past forgiven and forgotten*]. My pipe scraper! Where'd you find it?

CLAUDIA. Bertha found it when she plumped the sofa this morning. . . . Oh, and, David, that reminds me. Daruschka wants Bertha and Fritz. But we won't need a couple in the city, so that's all right, isn't it?

DAVID [*the light going out of his face*]. I guess so. . . . Better find out if it's all right with them, though.



CLAUDIA. I'll talk to Bertha right away. It's a much better job. That's wonderful, isn't it?

DAVID [*from top of stairs*]. Swell. [*Vanishes*]

CLAUDIA. Bertha! . . . Oh, Bertha! [*Suddenly shakes her head as if to clear it and leans against chair*. BERTHA *enters from dining room*]

BERTHA. You called, Mrs. Naughton?

CLAUDIA. Yes, I . . . [*Her voice trails off*]

BERTHA [*alarmed*]. What is it? . . . You don't feel good?

CLAUDIA [*faintly*]. It must be that hot bread you told me not to eat.

BERTHA. That was last night.

CLAUDIA. Yes, but I woke up this morning feeling funny. It passed off though.

BERTHA [*with a wealth of significance*]. Hot bread does not pass off.

CLAUDIA. Maybe it was the pickle before I went to bed.

BERTHA [*firmly*]. I don't think it is something you ate.

CLAUDIA. It can't be, I guess, because I'm all right again. Isn't that odd?

BERTHA [*all wise*]. No. It never lasts long. Just a little morning sickness, maybe, or maybe a little dizzy now and then.

CLAUDIA [*breathlessly*]. Bertha. . . . Are you sure? . . .

BERTHA [*exultingly*]. I bet you twenty cents. I told Fritz already.

CLAUDIA [*her mind going back*]. I never dreamed . . . Could it really be?

BERTHA. With my first baby it was three months before I knew.

CLAUDIA [*arrested*]. With your first baby? I thought there was only Hilda . . .

BERTHA [*her voice goes dead*]. I had two children.

CLAUDIA [*tasting vicariously BERTHA's bereavement*]. Oh, Bertha, how could you stand losing a child?

BERTHA [*bloodlessly*]. There are worse things than death.

CLAUDIA. There can't be! Death is so final.

BERTHA. No—it isn't. Hilda often is near me.

CLAUDIA [*awed*]. How wonderful to be able to feel that! I couldn't. I'd want the *person*.

BERTHA [*in crystallized acceptance*]. Yah, yah. . . .

CLAUDIA [*her mind racing ahead*]. Bertha, you won't mind the didies, will you?

BERTHA. I have been missing the didies!

CLAUDIA [*as a step sounds upstairs*]. We'll make up for it, with twins.—Oh, run, Bertha. Here he comes. This is a very private time in a woman's life—

BERTHA [*softly*]. And when you both want it—it's beautiful. [*For a fleeting instant, she relives her own young romance, as CLAUDIA, but a moment before, has tasted BERTHA's sorrow. Their eyes meet, and then for a moment their hands touch*]

CLAUDIA [*shyly*]. We certainly found you in the nick of time, Bertha.

BERTHA [*tremulously*]. For me, too, it was the right time, too. God is very good, child.

CLAUDIA [*reverently*]. I think He's swell! [BERTHA *quickly exits as DAVID comes downstairs*]

DAVID [*complacently*]. Who's swell?

CLAUDIA. Not you—God. [DAVID *is struck by something in her tone. He studies her a little apprehensively*]

DAVID. Listen, you're not really going to get religious on me, are you?

CLAUDIA. What's the matter with you and religion, anyway? You and God ought to get together. He does wonderful things for a person, really.

DAVID [*a little bitterly*]. What'd Bertha say about God finding her a new job?

CLAUDIA. Oh, I never told her. [*Importunately*] David, don't be silly. We need Bertha, we can't let her go now! [As DAVID *looks at her inquiringly*] On account of the didies.

DAVID. On account of the what?

CLAUDIA [*starry*]. Didies. Babies *have* didies you know. It's a different system than on the farm.

DAVID [*completely at sea*]. What are you talking about?

CLAUDIA. Can't you put one and one together?

DAVID. You're out of your head.

CLAUDIA. I bet you twenty cents.

DAVID. It's impossible.

CLAUDIA. That's what you think.

DAVID [*suspicion dawning in him*]. What have you been up to? . . . [Reaches out to grab her]

CLAUDIA. Leave me alone. Findings is keepings.

DAVID. I'll break your little neck. . . .

CLAUDIA [*searching his eyes*]. But this scene is all wrong! Aren't you happy? Don't you want a baby?

DAVID [*leaving much unsaid*]. Not now.

CLAUDIA [*muted*]. Why, David?

DAVID. You're too young.

CLAUDIA [*mercuric as always*]. But I want to have children young. With the proper management I can be a grandmother at forty!

DAVID. That's just dandy.

CLAUDIA [*with depths*]. Darling, don't feel like that. I'm oid. Inside of me, I'm old. As if I've lived before.

DAVID. Sometimes I think that's true.

CLAUDIA. It's going to be all right, really. Let it happen when it wants to.

DAVID. There's quite a little wisdom in that.

CLAUDIA. Unless you're not as happy about it as I am. Remember what

you said before? About two people having to want the same thing, or it's no go?

DAVID [*spending a moment in Heaven*]. I want it. [*Suddenly aware that he's been swept off his feet*] Say, wait a minute. How do you get that way?

CLAUDIA [*demurely*]. You should know.

DAVID. In words of one syllable, why didn't you tell me you were going to have this child before I went upstairs?

CLAUDIA [*parroting him*]. In words of one syllable, I did not know I was going to have twins before you went upstairs.

DAVID. Then it all happened while I was washing my hands?

CLAUDIA. Yes.

DAVID. *What* happened?

CLAUDIA. I was dizzy.

DAVID. I'm dizzy, too, but that doesn't make me pregnant!

CLAUDIA. This was a special kind of dizziness. Bertha said so.

DAVID [*ready to explode*]. Bertha said so? And you take Bertha's word for it, you crazy cluck!

CLAUDIA. But I know it's true. I have feelings when things are so.

DAVID. I wish you didn't have so damn many feelings.

CLAUDIA. I think I must have felt it when I sold the house to Daruschka.

DAVID [*trying to find the right words*]. But, Claudia, doesn't the thought of having children make you want to keep the farm?

CLAUDIA. Oh, I know; milk fresh from the cow, and eggs a minute old, and all that sort of thing. But just think how much we're going to *need* that extra money now.

DAVID. But money isn't everything. We've got enough to scrape through on.

CLAUDIA. You still don't want to sell it, do you?

DAVID. Now less than ever.

CLAUDIA [*slowly*]. And with me—it's—more than ever.

DAVID [*quietly*]. That's not so good. [*They look at each other*]

CLAUDIA [*in a small, miserable voice*]. But it's natural for a girl to want to be near her mother when she's having her first baby. [*Compelling his eyes*] Isn't it, David? Tell me if it isn't. Please.

DAVID [*after a long moment. A little thickly*]. I guess it is, darling. Quite natural. And normal.

CLAUDIA [*softly*]. I'm glad. I love you, David. [*With a sudden genuine impulse*] Darling, let's go outside before the sun goes down. I suddenly know that feeling you had about being close to the land.

DAVID. You go ahead. I want to make out Fritz's check first.

CLAUDIA. All right I'll meet you at the barn. I want to talk to Majesty. Majesty and I have quite a lot in common now. [*Drifts toward the terrace, surrounded by an almost palpable cloak of happiness. DAVID steps quickly to*

the door, and opens it for her. There is a kind of beauty in the gesture, surpassing chivalry]

[*With her lips*] Thank you, darling—for everything. [*She exits. DAVID stands watching her for an instant. Then closes the door, and swiftly goes to desk and takes a city telephone directory out of the drawer*]

[*The telephone rings. He reaches for it swiftly, closing book*]

DAVID [*at the phone*]. Hello—hello? . . . Yes, Mother. I was just looking up the doctor's number. I didn't know what was keeping you. . . . It's all right; she's not here. . . . No, she just went to the barn, you can talk. . . . [*Glances out of window*] It's safe; she must be over there already. [*He listens to what MRS. BROWN has to say, his expression registering profound emotion. When he speaks, however, his voice is steady*] That was giving it to you pretty straight, wasn't it? . . . Look here, I'm coming in. . . . Why? Oh, we'll go out and have a bite of dinner together. . . . I know you're all right, but I'd like to come in anyway. . . . No, she won't suspect anything. I've told her I might have to go back to town to see a client. . . . [*Frowns*] Hold on a minute, though. I'll have her on my tail. She said something about going along to have a visit with you. . . . I tell you what; you lie down and rest awhile, and catch the six-ten out here. . . . Because I say so. This is no time for you to be alone. . . . No, I won't tell her. She won't have to know anything until you want her to know it. . . . Now look here. If you don't come out, I'm coming in, and that's final. [*Hesitates*] Unless, of course, it's too much for you after a rotten day. [*He shakes his head at her answer, in a kind of wonderment*] Well, Mrs. Brown, I take my hat off to you, that's all I can say. I hope when my time comes I can take it like that. . . . [*Smiles a little*] Bologny, yourself. . . . [*Clears his throat*] Good. We'll meet you. . . . Of course I won't. Not a word. [*With robust assurance*] Sure, I can carry it off. Don't you worry. . . . So long, Mother. [*He hangs up the receiver, his face graven in lines of grief. He takes out his pipe, using the scraper on it half-heartedly, and then puts it down without filling it. He turns swiftly as the doors of the dining room open, and CLAUDIA stands in the threshold. One glance at her stricken, staring eyes and it's obvious that she knows. But DAVID nevertheless attempts to dissemble*] That was Mother on the wire; she's coming out on the six-ten. . . . [*He falters, aware of the futility of trying to soften the blow. He moves slowly toward her, his whole heart going out to her in a single whispered challenge to her courage*] Claudia? . . .

CLAUDIA [*speaking as if breath were at a premium within her*]. I heard the phone. I came back. You always said I'd listen . . . once too often—

DAVID. Oh, my darling . . . [*With a small cry of pity, he tries to draw her to him, but she stands numb and still, in his embrace, and he realizes that in this deep moment of her bereavement, he is but an alien, an intruder. Slowly, out of his vast love and understanding, he withdraws from her, permitting her the dignity of meeting alone the supreme test of an approaching*

womanhood. With the slight, almost imperceptible lifting of her closed, still face, the curtain slowly falls]

## ACT III

TIME: Later that evening.

SCENE: The same.

[The lamps are lit. As the curtain rises, BERTHA emerges from dining room. She carries a small supper tray, and FRITZ, in his white coat, holds the door for her. Their brief scene is played with the clumsy, poignant raillery of a love that has strengthened through the years on adversity and sorrow.]

FRITZ. Better I carry it up for you.

BERTHA [*the Amazon*]. Go away. Go away.

FRITZ. Don't trip.

BERTHA [*smartly*]. Since when do I trip? The salt. [*Starts back to the kitchen*]

FRITZ. It's on.

BERTHA. No!

FRITZ. Yes! [*He finds it on tray*]

BERTHA. My head is off my shoulders.

FRITZ. Cheer up.

BERTHA. I am worried. I cannot help it. The boy is in bad company again, and all you went through for him did not help him.

FRITZ. Maybe you are right, Bertha. But here is a happy household, and people do not pay us for bringing our troubles into it. Come. Smile, Bertha.

BERTHA. Don't treat me like a child. The supper gets cold.

FRITZ [*sternly*]. Bertha!

BERTHA [*turning back on stairs*]. What is it now?

FRITZ [*cajolingly*]. Smile? . . .

BERTHA [*frowning*]. Ach! [*Reluctantly the frown gives way to a smile as she exits upstairs. FRITZ, alone, no longer smiles. With a deep sigh, he walks to bay window and meticulously straightens the drapery. He pauses as he hears a car come to a stop outside. He peers through window, and then opens terrace door in anticipation. After a moment, DAVID enters*]

FRITZ. Mrs. Naughton isn't coming in?

DAVID. She doesn't feel very well. She wants a breath of air.

FRITZ. Did he say it was true about the baby—the doctor?

DAVID. Yes.

FRITZ [*suddenly uncertain as he scans DAVID's face*]. And everything is—

DAVID [*under strain*]. Everything's fine. [FRITZ, *hesitant to intrude, starts to exit through dining-room door. Pauses*]

FRITZ. Mrs. Brown is upstairs, sir.

DAVID [*taken aback*]. Already?

FRITZ. She caught the early train.

DAVID. Oh . . . [*A little too casually*] Was she all right, Fritz?

FRITZ [*unaware of trouble*]. Oh, yes. Only she had no supper and Bertha is making her eat something.

DAVID. Good. [FRITZ exits to dining room. DAVID opens terrace door and whistles softly. CLAUDIA enters. She is bloodless and stony, taut with a control that has not yet given way to tears]

CLAUDIA. I'm sorry. I couldn't face anyone just yet.

DAVID. I know. [*He removes her coat, leading her arms as if she were a child*]

CLAUDIA. It's all so different than I'd imagined it was going to be. I don't even want a baby now.

DAVID. Yes, you do.

CLAUDIA. Everything's changed. Just in a few short hours.

DAVID. Everything's always changing.

CLAUDIA. Then there isn't anything in life you can be certain of?

DAVID. Nothing. Except uncertainty.

CLAUDIA [*with bitter hope*]. Maybe I'll die before Mamma.

DAVID. That's a nice, unselfish little thought to wish on the poor woman.

CLAUDIA [*defiantly*]. It's what you said!

DAVID. All right, and I might die before either of you. Or all of us be destroyed by hurricane, or flood, or war.

CLAUDIA [*turning away from him*]. You're trying to tell me that losing your mother isn't really very important against all the other dreadful things that are happening in the world.

DAVID [*his hands on her averted shoulders*]. No, I'm not. Because it is important. Birth and death—that's the whole cycle of life; and whatever happens beyond that cycle is just so much embroidery. [*With a short laugh*] There's a lot of embroidery these days, I'll admit. But if you can take this, darling, you can take anything.

CLAUDIA [*turns in passionate rebellion*]. I can't take it. I won't take it! It isn't right for her to die!

DAVID. Who's running this universe? You or God?

CLAUDIA. There isn't any God.

DAVID. Hey, wait a minute. He's given you a home, a husband, a baby—

CLAUDIA. Don't fool yourself. [*In bleak disillusion*]. Nothing—and no one—really belongs to anyone.

DAVID. If you've learned that, you've learned a lot, my dearest.

CLAUDIA. Then what's the sense of pouring your heart and soul out on what you don't possess and never can possess?

DAVID. Because a loan carries a greater obligation than a gift.

CLAUDIA. I'll lend you a baby and take back your mother, is that it?

DAVID. Something like it.

CLAUDIA. No, thank you. I don't want children on those terms. I'm sorry I even went to the doctor.

DAVID. But he didn't give you the baby, I'm the guy that pulled that trick.

CLAUDIA [*on a little whimper of anguish*]. Oh, David, don't try to be gay. [*Sinks to sofa*] There's too much pain inside of me.

DAVID [*kneeling beside her*]. Then make friends with it, darling, and it'll stop hurting you.

CLAUDIA [*in a whisper*]. Make friends with pain? As if a person could.

DAVID. Mother has, all these weeks. And it's made her strong and quiet inside.

CLAUDIA. But why must it be?

DAVID. There's a reason behind it all.

CLAUDIA. It sounds like you're the one that believes in God all of a sudden.

DAVID [*simply*]. All of a sudden, I think I do.

CLAUDIA [*harshly*]. Then let Him work one of His miracles.

DAVID. It mightn't be the miracle you're asking for. [*Pulls her to him*] Look, darling . . . cry, why don't you?

CLAUDIA [*stiffening*]. I can't.

DAVID [*softly*]. I won't call you a sissy. Give way—let go—

CLAUDIA [*desperately*]. I can't. There aren't any tears in me. I just don't want to go on living. . . .

DAVID. Shame on you!

CLAUDIA [*in a kind of wonder*]. Doesn't life scare you at all?

DAVID. It scares the wits out of me. Come on, let's both sit down and bawl. . . .

CLAUDIA. Oh, David, I'm going to miss her so! [*As her voice climbs to a crescendo of anguish, the torrent of grief is at last loosed in heartbroken gulping sobs. . . . DAVID takes her in his arms*]

DAVID [*murmuring*]. That's so good for you, darling.

CLAUDIA [*struggling toward control*]. It's almost time to go to the station.

DAVID. Mother's here already, dear.

CLAUDIA [*dismayed*]. How did that happen?

DAVID. She probably rushed so, she caught the train ahead.

CLAUDIA [*in panic*]. She'll know I've been crying!

DAVID. Here's my handkerchief—Blow. [*He holds it to her nose*]

CLAUDIA. A person's got to hold it themselves to blow. [*BERTHA comes downstairs with tray. CLAUDIA blankets her face and her confusion*]

[*With her back turned*] Does my mother know we're down here, Bertha?

BERTHA. No, we did not hear you come in at all.

DAVID. Where'd you tell her we'd gone?

BERTHA. She is a hard one to fool! I told her you were visiting the cat, and that she believed.

DAVID. That was nothing short of genius, Bertha.

BERTHA. She will be so happy when she hears it is not a cat, but a baby.

DAVID [*richly; his hand on CLAUDIA's shoulder*] It'll be a grand thing for her to know.

CLAUDIA [*unsteadily*]. Did she eat any supper, Bertha?

FRITZ [*with satisfaction*]. Two nice chops.

DAVID. You see, I told you she liked chops.

BERTHA. I said to her . . . [*Apologetically*] Excuse me, it wasn't my place, but I said, "You should live all the time with us, Mrs. Brown, and not stay alone in a hotel . . ."

DAVID [*quickly*] What did she say, Bertha?

BERTHA. She said, no, she is going on a trip . . . [*A small, tense silence falls, as CLAUDIA and DAVID turn away. BERTHA is confusedly aware that she has perhaps said the wrong thing*]

CLAUDIA [*choked*]. What kind of a trip?

BERTHA [*with a deprecatory little laugh*] She said the country is too quiet for her; she wants to treat herself to a nice time in Florida. [*Eager to make things right*] But of course, when she hears about the baby, she will not want to go away, that is sure.

DAVID. Run and bathe your eyes, darling; I'll work things out with Bertha. [*CLAUDIA stumbles blindly to dining room*]

BERTHA [*understandingly*]. Do not worry. Many women cry in the beginning.

DAVID. I'm afraid there's no use beating about the bush, Bertha. Mrs. Brown went to the doctor, too, today.

BERTHA [*on an echo*]. Mrs. Brown?

DAVID. She won't be with us very much longer.

BERTHA [*profoundly shocked*]. No! Ach, no . . . [*Looks upstairs*] But she seemed just like always?—She wants to keep it from Mrs. Naughton, that is why. . . .

DAVID. Yes. [*Digresses*] I'm going to ask a favor of you, Bertha.

BERTHA. Anything. Anything.

DAVID. We had a chance to sell this place today. Under the circumstances, it's right for Mrs. Naughton to be near her mother. We'll take an apartment in town, and I'd love to know that we can count on you, and that Fritz will stay on up here, if necessary.

BERTHA. Surely I will stay with you. Surely Fritz will stay here.

DAVID. Thank you, Bertha. That makes things a lot smoother. [*CLAUDIA enters from dining room. She is in complete command of herself, as if in the short space she has been alone she has come to some clear decision within herself*]

CLAUDIA [*lifting her eyes to DAVID*]. Better?

DAVID. Much.—I told Bertha, dear. They'll stay.

CLAUDIA [*without drama or glibness*]. Then let's go on just as we are. Bertha's asking Mamma to come here to live with us made everything clear



at once. That's the way it ought to be, that's what a home is for. It holds you when you need it. It's a place to be born in and to die in. We have no right to give it up. I was wrong, David.

DAVID. But there'll be memories.

CLAUDIA. Memories can't hurt you. You said you could make friends with pain. Then you can make friends with memories too.

DAVID. But I don't think Mother would want to do it, darling. You know I'd love to have her here now, but she wouldn't want to be the cause of tears or long faces.

CLAUDIA. There needn't be any. I figured it all out while I was bathing my eyes.

DAVID [*swiftly*]. It isn't humanly possible, dear.

CLAUDIA. But you don't know what I was going to say.

DAVID. Yes, I do. You want to pretend to Mother that you haven't found out.

CLAUDIA. This is no privacy. Must you know my thoughts before I think them?

DAVID. That's how much I love you. [*He puts his arm around her*] It's a gorgeous, beautiful, wonderful impulse, darling, but one look at you, and she'd know.

BERTHA [*compassionately*]. Mr. Naughton is right, child. When your heart is broken it comes into your face.

CLAUDIA. Not my face. [*Tremulously*] You ask Mamma how good I was in my class play; she'll tell you— How are you on acting, Bertha?

BERTHA. I am a good liar. Fritz was in the prison when Hilda died. I never told him until months later, when he was free.

DAVID. Anybody says women are the weaker sex, don't believe them. [*He breaks off, as MRS. BROWN appears on stairs. She stands for a moment, looking down at them, as if trying to gauge the situation that lies before her. She has changed to a simple gray silk dress. Perhaps it is merely the softness of her gown or the stillness within her that lends her a subtle quality of remoteness in place of her usual crisp efficiency. When she speaks however, she shows no untoward sign of strain other than the disciplined tension that manifests in a slightly heightened effort toward the casual*]

MRS. BROWN. Well. Why didn't you let me know you were back. How's the cat? [*Reference to the cat focuses the situation to an abrupt normality. After a barely perceptible moment of struggle, CLAUDIA plunges into the give-and-take that marks their usual relationship. It is as if she quickly reaches for a familiar garment to cover up her aching soul. This is true of all of them. Pain underlies gaiety, making it richer, sharper, tinged faintly with delirium*]

CLAUDIA. The cat. What a question! How would you be if anyone did that to you?

MRS. BROWN. I didn't ask you that; I just asked you how he was.

DAVID. Very sulky.

CLAUDIA. He couldn't understand why.

DAVID. He said, "Now a fence is just something to get to the other side of."

MRS. BROWN [*resigned*]. All right, children. It was just an innocent question; forget it.

BERTHA [*suddenly an ally*]. Mrs. Brown, they did not even go to the cat!

MRS. BROWN. That doesn't surprise me in the least. They don't know the meaning of the word "truth." [BERTHA *nods large agreement and hurries kitchenward with tray*. MRS. BROWN *settles herself in an armchair, puts on glasses and takes out sweater*] However, if you think I'm going to get down on my knees and beg you to tell me where you were, you're mistaken. I'm not interested.

CLAUDIA. There you are, David. She's not interested.

DAVID [*picking up the evening paper*]. Then we don't tell her.

CLAUDIA. All she wants to do is gallivant to Florida and leave us to take care of her grandchildren. [MRS. BROWN *gives a single, swift, startled glance over her glasses. But with set lips she decides to permit them to get no further rise out of her. She merely knits a little faster while CLAUDIA and DAVID continue in intimate discussion, elaborately ignoring her. Only CLAUDIA's clenched hands and her frozen smile give the lie to the elaborate banter*]

DAVID [*opening paper to stock sheet*]. Market's up a couple of points. That's good; we'll be needing money.

CLAUDIA. With twins, you bet.

MRS. BROWN [*as she misses a stitch*] Jabber, jabber, jabber. Don't you two ever get tired of jabbering?

CLAUDIA [*sweetly*]. If we bother you, why don't you go upstairs?

MRS. BROWN [*with smooth irony*]. No need to burn double electric light. . . . If you're in such reduced circumstances.

CLAUDIA [*continuing to DAVID*]. Did Doctor Morrison say he'd charge the same price for twins, David?

DAVID. You can have up to five.

MRS. BROWN. That's nice talk.

DAVID [*too politely*]. Did you say something, Mother?

MRS. BROWN [*darkly*]. I said, twins run in families, if anyone should happen to ask you.

CLAUDIA. What do you mean? With my dual personality and David's charm, how can we miss?

MRS. BROWN [*dryly*]. You'd be surprised. [*Reluctantly succumbing to her curiosity*] Who is this man Morrison? The little doctor in the village?

DAVID. Listen to her. He's six foot, and gray hair.

CLAUDIA. That's nothing. She has a little seamstress, a little vegetable man, a little fish man—and they're all six foot.

MRS. BROWN [*ironically*]. All right, who is this giant?

CLAUDIA [*casually*]. Morrison? Oh, he's the little doctor in the village.

MRS. BROWN [*stymied*]. You can try this on now. Catch. [*Tosses sweater*]

CLAUDIA. How'd you get so much done since last night?

MRS. BROWN. Waiting at the dentist's.

CLAUDIA. Oh, yes, let's see what he did. [*Turns her mother to light*]  
Open? [MRS. BROWN *obediently opens her mouth and* CLAUDIA *peers at a side tooth*] Very becoming. Very lovely. [*Turns away to put on sweater*] How old is a baby before it gets its first teeth?

MRS. BROWN. I'm sure yours and David's will be born with a full upper and lower. [*As CLAUDIA starts for mirror*] Come back here. [*Adjusts shoulders of sweater*] Not bad. Now run upstairs and get me another ball of wool from my suitcase.

CLAUDIA. You dropped a stitch.

MRS. BROWN. Don't pay for it. Hurry up—get me the wool.

CLAUDIA. If she wants to ask you any personal questions, David, don't answer. Remember, she's not interested. [*Starts upstairs, two at a time*]

DAVID. Hey! Go, easy! Half of those twins are mine! [CLAUDIA *exits gingerly*]

MRS. BROWN [*as if unable to believe it*]. So it's true, David? That's why she was acting so keyed up.

DAVID. It's true, Mother.

MRS. BROWN. And you really did go to the doctor?

DAVID. She wanted to be sure before we told you.

MRS. BROWN. Is he a good man?

DAVID. Very.

MRS. BROWN. And she's all right?

DAVID [*with full meaning*]. She's all right.

MRS. BROWN. It'll be so hard to tell her now. I'm a coward, David.

DAVID [*quietly*]. When it comes to Claudia, I guess you are. You haven't got the guts to let her do her own suffering.

MRS. BROWN. She's not disciplined to pain. Life's been gentle with her up to now.

DAVID. And you'd like to go on taking all the hard knocks for her. Leave her only the easy ones.

MRS. BROWN. Wouldn't you?

DAVID. Sure. Only I know I can't. I know I don't have to. She'll meet life on its own terms. She wouldn't be your daughter if she couldn't.

MRS. BROWN. I'm not as noble as you think.

DAVID. Who the hell wants nobility?

MRS. BROWN. I'd love to stay around a few years longer. Especially now, with the baby coming.

DAVID [*simply*]. We love to have you.

MRS. BROWN [*musingly*]. It's strange? Isn't it?

DAVID. Tough.

MRS. BROWN. Don't tell her tonight.

DAVID. Maybe I won't tell her at all.

MRS. BROWN. If only we could spare her, David— That's why I want to go away.

DAVID [*firmly*]. None of that monkey business. You're staying here.

MRS. BROWN [*with a flash of her old fire and independence*]. I'd rather die! [*The bitter travesty of her words strikes them both at the same moment. They look at each other, bowled over by the stinging reality of it, and then*]

MRS. BROWN *laughs—almost giggles. Her reaction is contagious*

DAVID [*grinning*]. Settled. [*CLAUDIA enters from upstairs*]

CLAUDIA. What's the joke? . . . Catch. [*Tosses ball of wool to MRS. BROWN, and picks up DAVID's coat*] You wouldn't think of hanging your things up, would you, slob?

DAVID Who, me? [*Reads aloud an announcement from paper*] "Madame Daruschka is giving a concert at Symphony Hall in Boston tonight."

CLAUDIA [*arrested*]. Where? Show me.

DAVID [*deep in another article*]. I already read it to you.

CLAUDIA. What else about her?

DAVID. Nothing.

CLAUDIA. Let's see.

DAVID. That's all there was.

CLAUDIA [*very reasonably*]. Is it too much to ask to read it for myself? [*He makes an exaggerated business of turning back to announcement*]

DAVID. There . . . [*Points to the announcement with crucified expression*]

[*MRS. BROWN rises, takes DAVID's coat from chair, and exits to hall closet*]

CLAUDIA [*mumbling aloud*]. "Madame Daruschka is giving a concert at Symphony Hall in Boston tonight."

DAVID. Are you satisfied? [*He looks at her and sees that her mind is no longer on the paper, and suddenly realizes, as she does, that MRS. BROWN has left the room. Palpitantly they snatch a moment together, and tragedy stalks their tense, whispered words*]

CLAUDIA. Am I putting it over?

DAVID [*with all his heart*]. Star performance, darling. But how long can you keep it up? [*Draws her down to him for a swift, intense caress*]

CLAUDIA. Just as long as I have to.

MRS. BROWN [*entering*]. Pretty doings, the minute my back is turned.

CLAUDIA [*hands clasped demurely over stomach*] I got this for doing that.

MRS. BROWN. Such talk.—What was all the excitement about the concert in Boston?

DAVID. Daruschka was here for lunch, and that gives Claudia a proprietary interest in her entire career.

CLAUDIA. Does it mean nothing to you that the woman bought our house?

DAVID. So she did. Daruschka bought the farm, Mother.

MRS. BROWN. That's nice.

CLAUDIA. What's the use of telling her anything? She doesn't believe it.

DAVID. Maybe she'll believe this one— I came home today, Mother, and found your daughter being passionately kissed by a British Englishman.

MRS. BROWN. The one who keeps house by himself?

DAVID. I give up. [FRITZ enters from dining room]

FRITZ. Excuse me. Mrs. Brown said she would like to see the way Bertha makes apple strudel and she is just rolling one.

MRS. BROWN [rising]. Thank you, Fritz. That's something I don't want to miss. [Exits to kitchen. Immediately, gaiety deserts them]

FRITZ [with feeling]. Bertha told me, I want only to say—anything we can help with. Anything.

DAVID. Just help us to make the household normal and happy.

FRITZ. That is the best thing we can do for her. She stays with us now, of course?

DAVID. We'll talk her into it.

FRITZ. That is good. Here is where she belongs. [Exits, terrace]

CLAUDIA [deeply touched]. Oh, we're so lucky to have them.

DAVID [fervently]. When you think of the bastards we interviewed.

CLAUDIA. You never breathed a word to Mamma about where Fritz was, did you?

DAVID. I didn't see much point. She's a little conservative in some things. And I don't think she'd be particularly fond of the idea of jail.

CLAUDIA [after a small silence]. David? . . .

DAVID. Yes, dear?

CLAUDIA. Bertha told me this afternoon that she often feels—that Hilda is quite close to her.

DAVID [awkward and kind]. She must get a lot of comfort out of that kind of thinking.

CLAUDIA. It isn't your kind of thinking, is it?

DAVID. I'm a little too tough-minded.

CLAUDIA. You mean—when a person's dead, it's the end?

DAVID [tempering it]. I believe that we live in the thoughts of those who love us.

CLAUDIA [slowly, as if revelation were being born in her]. And I believe—with Bertha . . . [She looks at him] I wish you could, too, David.

DAVID [gently]. You think what makes you happy, darling. [MRS. BROWN enters from kitchen. The scene lifts]

MRS. BROWN [enthusiastically]. She's a born cook, that woman. And clean as wax. Immaculate.

CLAUDIA. The last little flower we had tasted the soup and put the spoon back.

DAVID [brutally]. What do you think you get in a restaurant?

CLAUDIA. Must you bring that up when I love to eat out?

MRS. BROWN [*going back to knitting*]. You've got treasures in Fritz and Bertha, that's all I can say. By the way, did you know they had a son? He was here when I came this evening.

DAVID [*with more than idle curiosity*]. What kind of a lad? How old?

MRS. BROWN. In his twenties. A strapping fellow. Good-looking. But . . . [*Lowers her voice*] There's something wrong there.

DAVID. What makes you think so?

MRS. BROWN. They seemed a little upset at my finding him here. And when I spoke to him, he had a very—well, not shifty, exactly—but a rather shamefaced air. They'd apparently been having some sort of argument when I came in. [*CLAUDIA and DAVID exchange glances*]

DAVID [*to CLAUDIA*]. Very interesting, Mrs. Sherlock Holmes.

MRS. BROWN [*eyeing them defensively*]. Now what?

DAVID [*airily*]. Nothing.

MRS. BROWN. Just the same, there's more to this than meets the eye. And I know what I'd do, if I were in your place.

CLAUDIA. What?

MRS. BROWN [*put upon*]. You'll jump down my throat, so I'll just be quiet and mind my own business.

CLAUDIA [*a little unhappily*]. I know. You'd investigate their references, and get to the bottom of things.

MRS. BROWN [*impatiently*]. What do you want references with people like Fritz and Bertha for? What good are references? They can be faked, they can be . . . [*Flounders*].

DAVID [*helpfully*]. Faked.

MRS. BROWN. Well, they can be.

DAVID. All right, what would you do, if you were in our place?

MRS. BROWN [*airily*]. Nothing.

CLAUDIA. A most irritating woman.

MRS. BROWN [*defiantly*]. Very well, I'll tell you what I'd do. If that boy's in bad company and Fritz and Bertha are worried about him, I'd offer him a job right here on this farm—digging potatoes, clearing the woods, I wouldn't care what. You can use two men outdoors; you've said so yourself.

DAVID. But my dear lady, be reasonable. Suppose this lad's done something wrong, something actually wrong?

CLAUDIA [*muffled*]. Like forging a check or something.

MRS. BROWN [*blurring out a family scandal*]. When you were a little girl you stole a dollar right out of my pocketbook. Big as life. And did I put you in a reform school? No. I just tried to show you that nice little girls didn't steal.

DAVID. Well, this nice little girl still steals. I can't keep one bit of change in my pants pocket.

MRS. BROWN [*struggling to be understood*]. What I'm trying to say is—

CLAUDIA [*softly*]. We know what you're trying to say.

DAVID [*with an emotion he takes pains to hide*]. You're a marvelous old duck, Mrs. Brown. Allow me to tweak your nose.

MRS. BROWN [*slapping his hand down smartly*]. And if it's the extra salary you're worried about . . . [*Knits furiously*] You don't have to worry about money.

CLAUDIA [*with colossal courage*]. She's going to leave us a million dollars, David.

MRS. BROWN [*not batting an eyelash*]. How'd you guess it?

CLAUDIA. That's why we're so nice to you. To keep on the right side of you.

MRS. BROWN. I wouldn't put it past you. [*Rises*] I've left my glasses in the kitchen.

CLAUDIA. I'll get them for you.

MRS. BROWN. What do you think I am? I'm not an invalid. I've got two feet. I can walk. [*MRS. BROWN exits to kitchen. CLAUDIA sinks to sofa*]

DAVID [*going to her*]. You're a glutton for punishment, aren't you?

CLAUDIA [*grinding it out*]. Once you get started, you can say anything . . .

DAVID [*his lips against her hair*]. But I wish you'd both grow up, darling. I wish you had the strength to put your arms around her and say, "Look, let's not go on pretending. I know. And I can face it."

CLAUDIA [*slowly*]. I wish I could do that, David.

DAVID. It would release her, utterly. It would release you, too. Because when you face a thing, you cease to fear it.

CLAUDIA. But we've never said things to each other in words.

DAVID. I don't think you'll have to say them—in words. It's not your system. [*He breaks off as FRITZ enters from terrace with kindling*]

CLAUDIA [*to DAVID*]. You'd better talk to him now, about the boy.

DAVID. Yes.—Oh, Fritz. [*FRITZ turns*] Mrs. Brown tells me your son was here tonight.

FRITZ [*the kindling toppling into the basket*] Yes, sir. I hope you don't mind.

DAVID. Not a bit.

CLAUDIA. My mother says he's a big, handsome boy.

FRITZ. He is. He is. Nice blue eyes. Only . . . [*Unsurety overcomes him*] We would like him to go to an agricultural college. That is why I wanted the check, Mr. Naughton. That is why Eugene came here. To get the money. It will not happen again. Bertha and I both know it is not good, when you work out, to have your family always around.

DAVID [*lights his pipe*] That's where you're wrong. [*Puffs at it*] You know there'll be a lot of brush to clear this winter, and we were wondering if we couldn't get—what's his name—Eugene?—to help you with it. Get that far meadow in shape.

FRITZ [*agape with the surprise of it*]. I believe, Mr. Naughton, that

Bertha jumps out of her skin with joy if such a thing could be. But . . . Eugene is . . . [*He falters*] We made a mistake with Eugene.

DAVID. I have an idea what it's all about, Fritz.

FRTZ [*agitated*]. He was young, headstrong—he did not know what he was doing.

DAVID. So you took the rap for him.

FRTZ. And now he has become bitter. He has turned on us. He thinks we throw it up to him. But that is not true. We want only to help him. To try to make up to him for how wrong we were to him.

CLAUDIA. But how were you wrong to him, Fritz? Why, you even went to jail for him.

FRTZ. That was wrong, Mrs. Naughton. We know it now. It would have been harder for us to let him take the punishment for what he did, but it would have been better for him. [*MRS. BROWN comes back with her glasses and quietly takes her place on the sofa. She picks up her knitting, but it lies idle in her hands, as if what she hears strikes deep into her consciousness*]

DAVID. In other words, Fritz, you tried to do the boy's suffering for him, and it didn't work.

FRTZ [*in whole agreement*]. It never works.

DAVID. But I'd like to talk to him, anyway.

FRTZ. I will reach him at once. You are very kind.

DAVID. Do you want Fritz to lay a fire in your room, Mother?

MRS. BROWN. How much extra will it be on my board bill?

FRTZ. Extra on your board bill. That is a good one. I will tell Bertha that. [*Exits*]

MRS. BROWN [*moved*]. He was pleased. There were tears in his eyes.

CLAUDIA [*softly*]. You only know half of what really happened.

DAVID. Better tell Mother later; he'll be coming back with the wood.

MRS. BROWN [*her curiosity again piqued*]. There are more secrets in this household . . .

CLAUDIA. That's what makes us interesting.

MRS. BROWN. I'm glad you think you're interesting.

CLAUDIA [*goes to an old chest of drawers*]. I think we're very interesting, don't you, David?

DAVID. Good God, yes.

CLAUDIA [*withdrawing a loosely tied package*] Which reminds me. I bought you both a present. [*Opens paper, and tosses top part of a gayly colored pajama into DAVID's lap*]. Top for you, bottom's for Mamma. [*Lays bottom part of pajama in MRS. BROWN's lap*]

DAVID [*patiently*]. Another sale.

CLAUDIA [*indignantly*]. These were seven ninety-five, if you please. Pure silk.

MRS. BROWN [*with asperity*]. They're not pure silk.

CLAUDIA [*admitting it*]. Well, maybe not so pure, but—



DAVID. And they're not seven ninety-five—

CLAUDIA [*turning on him*]. I said *were*. You'll never guess how much they were reduced to. Are you medium?

DAVID [*modestly*]. I always thought I was large.

CLAUDIA. They had no large left. The salesman said you were medium.

DAVID. How the blazes does he know?

CLAUDIA. I described you. You are decidedly medium.

MRS. BROWN. I think I'll let David have my half of the present, if you don't mind.

CLAUDIA [*hastily*]. Not until you've altered them—

MRS. BROWN. I thought there was a trick in it. [*Holds pajamas up. One leg is very long, the other very short. Two pieces of material fall to the floor*]

DAVID. What's the idea? Am I a flamingo or something?

CLAUDIA [*placatingly*]. Don't get excited; I just shortened the same leg twice. Mamma will fix it; you'll never know the difference.

MRS. BROWN. What do you think I am, a magician? Why didn't you let me do it in the first place?

CLAUDIA. I thought it would be good practice for my soul.

DAVID. Next time get your soul practice on your own stuff. I'll look sweet in those.

CLAUDIA [*blithely*]. Go on, try them on now, and let's see. [*During the above scene, none of them has heard the front door open, nor are they aware that JULIA appears suddenly at the threshold. She stands, watching them, not saying anything, merely absorbing the quality of deep attunement and happiness that seems to emanate from them. Dressed as she was in the afternoon—every hair in place—she nevertheless gives the impression that she is inwardly overwrought and at loose ends. But as she takes in the scene before her, her lips relax in a smile, and a certain wistfulness creeps over her*]

MRS. BROWN [*surveying CLAUDIA's handiwork dubiously*]. Remarkable needlewoman, my daughter.

DAVID. Damn good at embroidery, though.

MRS. BROWN [*with pins in her mouth*]. Embroidery—that's a good one.

CLAUDIA. Take the pins out of your mouth and speak plainly.

MRS. BROWN [*plainly*]. I said "embroidery"—that's a good one. She can't even darn a sock properly. [*CLAUDIA mimics her*]

JULIA [*laughing*]. It must be the country air makes you like this.

MRS. BROWN [*turning in surprise*]. Why, it's Julia . . .

CLAUDIA. I thought you were in Boston!

JULIA. Well, I came back.

CLAUDIA. Why?

JULIA [*crisply*]. None of your business. No, but one of the reasons was to tell you not to sell this house. . . . Hello, Mrs. Brown, nice to see you. . . .

MRS. BROWN. What's all this about selling a house?

JULIA. Just don't do it, that's all.

CLAUDIA. Did you come back a hundred miles to tell us that?

JULIA. You've got the biggest bump of curiosity I ever saw.

DAVID. And it gets bigger every day.—Why did you come back, Julia?

MRS. BROWN. You might as well tell them. They'll nag the life out of you until they find out.—Besides, I'd like to know myself.

JULIA [*keeping her own secrets*]. I changed my plans. I called Hartley and he's meeting me at New Haven in an hour.

CLAUDIA. It sounds exciting.

JULIA. It is, rather. We're going away for a weekend.—Now suppose you tell me what you've decided to do about the farm. [*To DAVID*] I feel responsible.

DAVID. Don't worry. Daruschka's check goes back in the morning.

MRS. BROWN. What check? Would it hurt you to tell your old mother some of these things?

DAVID. We told you.

MRS. BROWN. But you tell me some things so that I shouldn't believe them, and other things so that I should. . . .

JULIA. Poor Mrs. Brown.

MRS. BROWN. Next thing I hear, it'll be true about David coming home and finding you in the arms of another man.

JULIA. This is interesting! Tell me more, Mrs. Brown.

MRS. BROWN. From all I can gather, he lives on this party line.

DAVID. Give the poor fellow a break, Mother, living on a party line's a hell of an uncomfortable position.

JULIA [*incredulously*]. This doesn't make sense.

CLAUDIA. Julia doesn't think I have enough with-what to have a lover. You tell her, David.

DAVID. She has.

CLAUDIA. Go on, tell her more. Tell her I'm really good.

DAVID. She's really good.

JULIA. Well, I'll be blowed! I'm going.

CLAUDIA. Wait a minute. Daruschka's earrings!

JULIA. She said to keep them; they're only paste.—I see you're back to normal. David didn't like the way we fixed you up?

DAVID. I certainly did; she looked like a million dollars.

CLAUDIA. You told me I looked like a little tart!

DAVID. Is it my fault you don't know a compliment when you hear one?  
[*He tweaks her nose*]

CLAUDIA. You've a horrid habit with noses, do you know it?

JULIA. Hartley used to do that; it seems to run in the family.

CLAUDIA. Hartley and David are a lot alike.

JULIA [*a little eagerly*]. Do you think so?

CLAUDIA. They even look alike, except that Hartley's put on weight.

JULIA [*half to herself*]. And he's going to get that off.

DAVID. That's right. Take the old boy out, and exercise him. [BERTHA enters from dining room with a glass of orange juice on tray]

BERTHA [*to JULIA*]. Good evening. Could I fix you something, too?

JULIA. No thank you, Bertha. I hate to leave, but I have to.

CLAUDIA [*appraising glass suspiciously*]. What's this?

BERTHA. Orange juice.

CLAUDIA. Why orange juice? It looks healthy.

BERTHA. For you, for the baby.

JULIA [*eyes wide*]. What baby?

CLAUDIA [*on a bleat of horror*]. It has an egg in it! [BERTHA slinks guiltily to dining room]

MRS. BROWN. Supposing. An egg isn't poison. Drink it down.

DAVID [*smugly*]. Drink it down!

CLAUDIA [*approaching him*]. You're the father; you drink half!

DAVID [*even more smugly*]. I don't need it, now.

JULIA [*completely at sea*]. Won't anybody tell me what this is all about?

MRS. BROWN. Oh, no. Nobody ever tells anybody anything in this household.

CLAUDIA [*gulping drink with contortions of distaste*]. I wanted it to be a surprise, until the baby was here.

DAVID. She's going to carry it by remote control.

CLAUDIA. What do you want to bet I don't show at all?

MRS. BROWN [*with reminiscent complacence*]. I was that way— [DAVID and CLAUDIA snort]

JULIA. I believe you, Mrs. Brown— And I think it's wonderful. No wonder you look so well. Being a prospective grandmother agrees with you.

CLAUDIA [*behind sofa*]. She does look marvelous, doesn't she? So relaxed and happy. . . .

JULIA [*as she looks around at them*]. Happy? You're the happiest people I know. I envy you.

CLAUDIA [*in a new kind of voice*]. Don't ever envy anyone, Julia. Just make the most of every minute—while you can.

DAVID [*gravely*]. That's about it, Julia.

JULIA [*simply*]. Thanks. I'm glad I stopped in.

CLAUDIA. I'll take you to the door. [*As they exit, MRS. BROWN remains very still, upon the sofa. DAVID lowers his eyes to his pipe*]

MRS. BROWN [*quietly*]. She knows, David. [*Something in her tone compels his gaze. He rises, and goes to her*]

DAVID. Yes, Mother, she knows. [*Another small silence falls between them*]

MRS. BROWN [*softly*]. And she's let me go . . .

DAVID [*quietly*]. I think so.

MRS. BROWN [*like a prayer*]. It makes all the difference, David.

DAVID [*with a profound humility of wanting to know*]. Does it, Mother?  
[*Crosses to back of sofa*]

MRS. BROWN. Yes, it's like a miracle. It's just as if she were the mother, and I were the child.

DAVID. Maybe that's the way it ought to be. If it's right.

MRS. BROWN. It's right, David. Suddenly, I'm quite sure of that.

DAVID [*gruffly*]. Just the same, I'll miss you a hell of a lot around here. I guess you know that, don't you?

MRS. BROWN [*with all her love for him behind her words*]. You can't get rid of me so easily. I'll be sticking my two cents in every so often, you wait and see.

DAVID [*humorously, but as if, inside, he wants desperately to believe*]. How'll I know?

MRS. BROWN. I'll tweak your nose.

DAVID [*buskily*]. You do that. [CLAUDIA enters]

CLAUDIA. Julia's very sweet.

DAVID. Yes, she was really almost human tonight. After ten years I'm beginning to see why Hartley married her.

MRS. BROWN. I wonder how you talk about me behind my back.

CLAUDIA [*abruptly*]. Hey!

MRS. BROWN. What's the matter?

CLAUDIA. How long before you begin to feel life? . . .

MRS. BROWN. Four and a half months. Why?

CLAUDIA. That's ridiculous; I just felt it.

DAVID. Lady, that wasn't life; that was bread and jelly.

MRS. BROWN. If that kind of talk is going to begin again, I'm going upstairs. [*Gathers up her knitting*]

CLAUDIA. I'll have Bertha bring you some hot milk—with an egg in it.

MRS. BROWN. You'll do nothing of the kind.

CLAUDIA. It'll make you sleep.

MRS. BROWN [*crisply*]. I don't need anything to make me sleep, thank you.

CLAUDIA [*coming close to her for a brief, fleeting moment*]. Will you really rest well?

MRS. BROWN [*in full answer*]. Like an infant . . . with not a worry in my heart. [*Starts up the stairs*]

DAVID. Pleasant dreams, Mother. [*He moves to CLAUDIA and puts his arm around her. CLAUDIA slips her hand in his. Together, they stand there, looking up at MRS. BROWN*]

CLAUDIA [*softly*]. So long, Mrs. Brown. . . .

MRS. BROWN [*with a little smile*]. So long, Mrs. Naughton. . . . [FRITZ, in his rough jacket, has come to the terrace door with an armful of wood, which he has brought in from outdoors. Slowly, as he pulls off his cap, the curtain falls]

## LOVE IS NOT ALL

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1931)*

LOVE is not all; it is not meat nor drink  
 Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain,  
 Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink  
 And rise and sink and rise and sink again;  
 Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath, 5  
 Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;  
 Yet many a man is making friends with death  
 Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.  
 It well may be that in a difficult hour,  
 Pinned down by pain and moaning for release, 10  
 Or nagged by want past resolution's power,  
 I might be driven to sell your love for peace,  
 Or trade the memory of this night for food.  
 It well may be, I do not think I would.

## WHEN WE THAT WORE THE MYRTLE

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1931)*

When we that wore the myrtle wear the dust,  
 And years of darkness cover up our eyes,  
 And all our arrogant laughter and sweet lust  
 Keep counsel with the scruples of the wise;  
 When boys and girls that now are in the loins 5  
 Of croaking lads, dip oar into the sea,—  
 And who are these that dive for copper coins?  
 No longer we, my love, no longer we—  
 Then let the fortunate breathers of the air,  
 When we lie speechless in the muffling mould, 10  
 Tease not our ghosts with slander, pause not there  
 To say that love is false and soon grows cold,  
 But pass in silence the mute grave of two  
 Who lived and died believing love was true.

## EFFORT AT SPEECH BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE

*Muriel Rukeyser (1935)*

: Speak to me. Take my hand. What are you now?  
 I will tell you all. I will conceal nothing.  
 When I was three, a little child read a story about a rabbit  
 who died, in the story, and I crawled under a chair:  
 a pink rabbit: it was my birthday, and a candle. 5  
 burnt a sore spot on my finger, and I was told to be happy.

: Oh, grow to know me. I am not happy. I will be open:  
 Now I am thinking of white sails against a sky like music,  
 like glad horns blowing, and birds tilting, and an arm about me.  
 There was one I loved, who wanted to live, sailing. 10

: Speak to me. Take my hand. What are you now?  
 When I was nine, I was fruitily sentimental,  
 fluid : and my widowed aunt played Chopin,  
 and I bent my head on the painted woodwork, and wept.  
 I want now to be close to you. I would 15  
 link the minutes of my day's close, somehow, to your days.

: I am not happy. I will be open.  
 I have liked lamps in evening corners, and quiet poems.  
 There has been fear in my life. Sometimes I speculate  
 On what a tragedy his life was, really. 20

: Take my hand. First my mind in your hand. What are you now?  
 When I was fourteen, I had dreams of suicide,  
 and I stood at a steep window, at sunset, hoping toward death:  
 if the light had not melted clouds and plains to beauty,  
 if light had not transformed that day, I would have leapt. 25  
 I am unhappy. I am lonely. Speak to me.

: I will be open. I think he never loved me:  
 he loved the bright beaches, the little lips of foam  
 that ride small waves, he loved the veer of gulls:  
 he said, with a gay mouth: I love you. Grow to know me. 30

: What are you now? If we could touch one another,  
 if these our separate entities could come to grips,  
 clenched like a Chinese puzzle . . . yesterday  
 I stood in a crowded street that was live with people,  
 and no one spoke a word, and the morning shone. 35  
 Everyone silent, moving. . . . Take my hand. Speak to me.

#### FOUR IN A FAMILY

*Muriel Rukeyser (1935)*

The father and mother sat, and the sister beside her.  
 I faced the two women across the table's width,  
 speaking, and all the time he looked at me,  
 sorrowing, saying nothing, with his hard tired breath.

Their faces said : This is your home; and I : 5  
 I never come home, I never go away.  
 And they all answered : Stay.

All day the city turned about this room,  
 and silence had remained between our faces,  
 divisions outside to concentrate a world  
 tally here only to dead profits and losses. 10

We follow barrier voices, and we go fast,  
 unknown to each other, they race, I turn away.  
 No voice is strong enough to cry me Stay.

My sister, I wished upon you those delights 15  
 time never buries,  
 more precious than heroes.

Strange father, strange mother, who are you, who are you?  
 Where have I come,  
 how shall I prosper home? 20

## REMEMBER

*Christina Rossetti (1847)*

Remember me when I am gone away,  
 Gone far away into the silent land;  
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
 Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.  
 Remember me when no more, day by day, 5  
 You tell me of our future that you planned:  
 Only remember me; you understand  
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
 Yet if you should forget me for a while  
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
 For if the darkness and corruption leave  
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
 Better by far you should forget and smile:  
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

## SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1847)*

## VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
 Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore,  
 Alone upon the threshold of my door  
 Of individual life I shall command  
 The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand 5

Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
 Without the sense of that which I forbore—  
 Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land  
 Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine  
 With pulses that beat double. What I do 10  
 And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
 Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue  
 God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
 And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

## VII

The face of all the world is changed, I think,  
 Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul  
 Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole  
 Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink  
 Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink, 5  
 Was caught up into love, and taught the whole  
 Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole  
 God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,  
 And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.  
 The names of country, heaven, are changed away 10  
 For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;  
 And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,  
 (The singing angels know) are only dear  
 Because thy name moves right in what they say.

## XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought  
 Except for love's sake only. Do not say,  
 "I love her for her smile—her look—her way  
 Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought  
 That falls in well with mine, and certes brought 5  
 A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—  
 For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may  
 Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,  
 May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
 Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,— 10  
 A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
 Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
 But love me for love's sake, that evermore  
 Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

## XX

Belovèd, my Belovèd, when I think  
 That thou wast in the world a year ago,  
 What time I sat alone here in the snow



And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink  
 No moment at thy voice, but, link by link, 5  
 Went counting all my chains as if that so  
 They never could fall off at any blow  
 Struck by thy possible hand,—why, thus I drink  
 Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,  
 Never to feel thee thrill the day or night 10  
 With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull  
 Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white  
 Thow sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,  
 Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

## XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace. 5  
 I love thee to the level of every day's  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
 I love thee with the passion put to use 10  
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life—and, if God choose,  
 I shall but love thee better after death.

## SONNETS

*William Shakespeare (1593-98)*

## XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries  
 And look upon myself and curse my fate, 5  
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
 Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
 With what I most enjoy contented least;  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state, 10

Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

## XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
 I summon up remembrance of things past,  
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste,  
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5  
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
 And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,  
 And moan the expense of many a vanished sight—  
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10  
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,  
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

## I.XXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day 5  
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
 Which by and by black night doth take away,  
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10  
 As the deathbed whereon it must expire,  
 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

## CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
 Admit impediments. Love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds,  
 Or bends with the remover to remove.  
 O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark 5  
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
 It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
     If this be error and upon me proved,  
     I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

10

## CXXX

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
 I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
 And in some perfumes is there more delight  
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
 I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:  
     And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
     As any she belied with false compare.

5

10

## SONNETS

(From The House of Life)

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (1881)

## IV. LOVESIGHT

When do I see thee most, beloved one?  
 When in the light the spirits of mine eyes  
 Before thy face, their altar, solemnize  
 The worship of that Love through thee made known?  
 Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)  
 Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies  
 Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,  
 And my soul only sees thy soul its own?  
 O love, my love! if I no more should see  
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,  
 Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—  
 How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope  
 The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,  
 The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

5

10

## V. HEART'S HOPE

By what word's power, the key of paths untrod,  
 Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,  
 Till parted waves of Song yield up the shore  
 Even as that sea which Israel crossed dryshod?  
 For lo! in some poor rhythmic period, 5  
 Lady, I fain would tell how evermore  
 Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor  
 Thee from myself, neither our love from God.  
 Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine, would I  
 Draw from one loving heart such evidence 10  
 As to all hearts all things shall signify;  
 Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense  
 As instantaneous penetrating sense,  
 In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone by.

## XIII. YOUTH'S ANTIPHONY

"I love you, sweet: how can you ever learn  
 How much I love you?" "You I love even so,  
 And so I learn it." "Sweet, you cannot know  
 How fair you are." "If fair enough to earn  
 Your love, so much is all my love's concern." 5  
 "My love grows hourly, sweet." "Mine too doth grow,  
 Yet love seemed full so many hours ago!"  
 Thus lovers speak, till kisses claim their turn.  
 Ah! happy they to whom such words as these  
 In youth have served for speech the whole day long, 10  
 Hour after hour, remote from the world's throng,  
 Work, contest, fame, all life's confederate pleas,—  
 What while Love breathed in sighs and silences  
 Through two blent souls one rapturous undersong.

## XIX. SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long, fresh grass,—  
 The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:  
 Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms  
 'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass. 5  
 All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,  
 Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge  
 Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.  
 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.  
 Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly  
 Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky,— 10  
 So this wing'd hour is dropped to us from above.  
 Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,  
 This close-companioned inarticulate hour  
 When twofold silence was the song of love.

## XXVI. MID-RAPTURE

Thou lovely and belovèd, thou my love;  
 Whose kiss seems still the first; whose summoning eyes,  
 Even now, as for our love-world's new sunrise,  
 Shed very dawn; whose voice, attuned above  
 All modulation of the deep-bowered dove, 5  
 Is like a hand laid softly on the soul;  
 Whose hand is like a sweet voice to control  
 Those worn tired brows it hath the keeping of:—  
 What word can answer to thy word,—what gaze  
 To thine, which now absorbs within its sphere 10  
 My worshiping face, till I am mirrored there  
 Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays?  
 What clasp, what kiss mine inmost heart can prove,  
 O lovely and belovèd, O my love?

## XXIV. THE DARK GLASS

Not I myself know all my love for thee:  
 How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh  
 To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?  
 Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be  
 As doors and windows bared to some loud sea, 5  
 Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;  
 And shall my sense pierce love,—the last relay  
 And ultimate outpost of eternity?  
 Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?  
 One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand, 10  
 One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.  
 Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call  
 And veriest touch of powers primordial  
 That any hour-girt life may understand.

## LXX. THE HILL SUMMIT

This feast-day of the sun, his altar there  
 In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song;  
 And I have loitered in the vale too long  
 And gaze now a belated worshiper.  
 Yet may I not forget that I was ware, 5  
 So journeying, of his face at intervals  
 Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls,—  
 A fiery bush with coruscating hair.  
 And now that I have climbed and won this height,  
 I must tread downward through the sloping shade 10  
 And travel the bewildered tracks till night.  
 Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed  
 And see the gold air and the silver fade  
 And the last bird fly into the last light.

## SONG

*John Donne (1633)*

Go and catch a falling star,	All strange wonders that befell thee,	
Get with child a mandrake root,	And swear	16
Tell me where all past years are,	Nowhere	
Or who cleft the devil's foot;	Lives a woman true and fair.	
Teach me to hear mermaids singing, 5		
Or to keep off envy's stinging,	If thou find'st one, let me know;	
And find	Such a pilgrimage were sweet. 20	
What wind	Yet do not; I would not go,	
Serves to advance an honest mind.	Though at next door we might meet.	
If thou be'st born to strange sights, 10	Though she were true when you met	
Things invisible go see,	her,	
Ride ten thousand days and nights	And last till you write your letter,	
Till Age snow white hairs on thee;	Yet she	25
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell	Will be	
me	False, ere I come, to two or three.	

## THE INDIFFERENT

*John Donne (1633)*

I can love both fair and brown;  
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays;  
 Her who loves loneliness best, and her who masks and plays;  
 Her whom the country formed, and whom the town;  
 Her who believes, and her who tries; 5  
 Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,  
 And her who is dry cork and never cries.  
 I can love her, and her, and you, and you:  
 I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you? 10  
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?  
 Or have you all old vices spent and now would find out others?  
 Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?  
 O we are not, be not you so;  
 Let me—and do you—twenty know; 15  
 Rob me, but bind me not; and let me go.  
 Must I, who came to travel thorough you,  
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song;  
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore 20

She heard not this till now; it should be so no more.  
 She went, examined, and returned ere long,  
 And said, "Alas! some two or three  
 Poor heretics in love there be,  
 Which think to stablish dangerous constancy. 25  
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,  
 You shall be true to them who're false to you.'"

## THE DREAM

John Donne (1633)

Dear love, for nothing less than thee  
 Would I have broke this happy dream;  
 It was a theme  
 For reason, much too strong for fantasy.  
 Therefore thou waked'st me wisely; yet 5  
 My dream thou brok'st not, but continued'st it.  
 Thou art so true that thoughts of thee suffice  
 To make dreams truths and fables histories;  
 Enter these arms, for since thou thought'st it best  
 Not to dream all my dream, let's act the rest. 10

As lightning, or a taper's light,  
 Thine eyes, and not thy noise, waked me;  
 Yet I thought thee—  
 For thou lov'st truth—an angel, at first sight;  
 But when I saw thou saw'st my heart, 15  
 And knew'st my thoughts beyond an angel's art,  
 When thou knew'st what I dreamt, when thou knew'st when  
 Excess of joy would wake me, and cam'st then,  
 I must confess it could not choose but be  
 Profane to think thee anything but thee. 20

Coming and staying showed thee thee,  
 But rising makes me doubt that now  
 Thou art not thou.  
 That Love is weak where Fear's as strong as he;  
 'Tis not all spirit pure and brave 25  
 If mixture it of fear, shame, honor have.  
 Perchance as torches, which must ready be,  
 Men light and put out, so thou deal'st with me.  
 Thou cam'st to kindle, go'st to come; then I  
 Will dream that hope again, but else would die. 30

ANDREA DEL SARTO  
CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

*Robert Browning (1855)*

But do not let us quarrel any more,  
 No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:  
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.  
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?  
 I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear, 5  
 Treat his own subject after his own way,  
 Fix his own time, accept too his own price,  
 And shut the money into this small hand  
 When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?  
 Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love! 10  
 I often am much wearier than you think,  
 This evening more than usual, and it seems  
 As if—forgive now—should you let me sit  
 Here by the window with your hand in mine  
 And look a half-hour forth on Fiesolè, 15  
 Both of one mind, as married people use,  
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,  
 I might get up to-morrow to my work  
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.  
 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! 20  
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,  
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.  
 Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve  
 For each of the five pictures we require:  
 It saves a model. So! keep looking so— 25  
 My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!  
 —How could you ever prick those perfect ears,  
 Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—  
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,  
 Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30  
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn  
 While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.  
 You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,  
 There's what we painters call our harmony!  
 A common grayness silvers everything,— 35  
 All in a twilight, you and I alike  
 —You, at the point of your first pride in me  
 (That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;  
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down  
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesolè. 40  
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;  
 That length of convent-wall across the way  
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;



The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,  
And autumn grows, autumn in everything. 45  
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape  
As if I saw alike my work and self  
And all that I was born to be and do,  
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.  
How strange now looks the life He makes us lead; 50  
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!  
I feel He laid the fetter: let it lie!  
This chamber for example—turn your head—  
All that's behind us! You don't understand  
Nor care to understand about my art, 55  
But you can hear at least when people speak:  
And that cartoon, the second from the door  
—It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be—  
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.  
I can do with my pencil what I know, 60  
What I see, what at bottom of my heart  
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—  
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,  
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,  
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week, 65  
And just as much they used to say in France.  
At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!  
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:  
I do what many dream of all their lives,  
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70  
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such  
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,  
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive  
To paint a little thing like that you smeared  
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,— 75  
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,  
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!  
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.  
There burns a truer light of God in them,  
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain, 80  
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt  
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.  
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,  
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,  
Enter and take their place there sure enough, 85  
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.  
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.  
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—  
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.  
I, painting from myself and to myself, 90  
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame

Or their praise either. Somebody remarks  
 Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,  
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or else  
 Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that? 95  
 Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?  
 Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
 Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray  
 Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!  
 I know both what I want and what might gain, 100  
 And yet how profitless to know, to sigh  
 "Had I been two, another and myself,  
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.  
 Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth  
 The Urbinate who died five years ago. 105  
 ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)  
 Well, I can fancy how he did it all,  
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,  
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,  
 Above and through his art—for it gives way; 110  
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—  
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,  
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,  
 He means right—that, a child may understand.  
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it: 115  
 But all the play, the insight and the stretch—  
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?  
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,  
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!  
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think— 120  
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.  
 But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,  
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,  
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird  
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare— 125  
 Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!  
 Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged  
 "God and the glory! never care for gain.  
 The present by the future, what is that?  
 Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo! 130  
 Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"  
 I might have done it for you. So it seems:  
 Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.  
 Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;  
 The rest avail not. Why do I need you? 135  
 What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?  
 In this world, who can do a thing, will not;  
 And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:  
 Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end, 140  
 God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.  
 'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,  
 That I am something underrated here,  
 Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.  
 I dared not, do you know, leave home all day, 145  
 For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.  
 The best is when they pass and look aside;  
 But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.  
 Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,  
 And that long festal year at Fontainebleau! 150  
 I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,  
 Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,  
 In that humane great monarch's golden look,—  
 One finger in his beard or twisted curl  
 Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile, 155  
 One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,  
 The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,  
 I painting proudly with his breath on me,  
 All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,  
 Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls 160  
 Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—  
 And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,  
 This in the background, waiting on my work,  
 To crown the issue with a last reward!  
 A good time, was it not, my kingly days? 165  
 And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—  
 'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;  
 Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,  
 And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt  
 Out of the grange whose four walls make his world. 170  
 How could it end in any other way?  
 You called me, and I came home to your heart.  
 The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since  
 I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?  
 Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold, 175  
 You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!  
 "Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;  
 The Roman is the better when you pray,  
 But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"  
 Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge 180  
 Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows  
 My better fortune, I resolve to think.  
 For, do you know, Lucretia, as God lives,  
 Said one day Agnolo, his very self,  
 To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . . 185  
 (When the young man was flaming out his thoughts  
 Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

Too lifted up in heart because of it)  
 "Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub  
 Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how, 190  
 Who, were he set to plan and execute  
 As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,  
 Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"  
 To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.  
 I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see, 195  
 Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!  
 Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!  
 Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth  
 (What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?  
 Do you forget already words like those?), 200  
 If really there was such a chance, so lost,—  
 Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.  
 Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!  
 This hour has been an hour! Another smile?  
 If you would sit thus by me every night 205  
 I should work better, do you comprehend?  
 I mean that I should earn more, give you more.  
 See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;  
 Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,  
 The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. 210  
 Come from the window, love—come in, at last,  
 Inside the melancholy little house  
 We built to be so gay with. God is just.  
 King Francis may forgive me; oft at nights,  
 When I look up from painting, eyes tired out, 215  
 The walls become illumined, brick from brick  
 Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,  
 That gold of his I did cement them with!  
 Let us but love each other. Must you go?  
 That Cousin here again? he waits outside? 220  
 Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?  
 More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?  
 Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?  
 While hand and eye and something of a heart  
 Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth? 225  
 I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit  
 The gray remainder of the evening out,  
 Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly  
 How I could paint, were I but back in France,  
 One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face, 230  
 Not yours this time! I want you at my side  
 To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—  
 Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.  
 Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.  
 I take the subjects for his corridor, 235

Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,  
 And throw him in another thing or two  
 If he demurs; the whole should prove enough  
 To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,  
 What's better and what's all I care about, 240  
 Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!  
 Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,  
 The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.  
 I regret little, I would change still less. 245  
 Since there my past life lies, why alter it?  
 The very wrong to Francis!—it is true  
 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,  
 And built this house and sinned, and all is said.  
 My father and my mother died of want. 250  
 Well, had I riches of my own? You see  
 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.  
 They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:  
 And I have labored somewhat in my time  
 And not been paid profusely. Some good son 255  
 Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!  
 No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,  
 You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.  
 This must suffice me here. What would one have?  
 In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance— 260  
 Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,  
 Meted on each side by the angel's reed,  
 For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me  
 To cover—the three first without a wife,  
 While I have mine! So—still they overcome 265  
 Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

## ISOLT OF BRITTANY

(From *Tristram*)

*Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1927)

### I

Isolt of the white hands, in Brittany,  
 Could see no longer northward anywhere  
 A picture more alive or less familiar  
 Than a blank ocean and the same white birds  
 Flying, and always flying, and still flying,

Yet never bringing any news of him  
 That she remembered, who had sailed away  
 The spring before—saying he would come back,  
 Although not saying when. Not one of them,  
 For all their flying, she thought, had heard the name 10  
 Of Tristram, or of him beside her there  
 That was the King, her father. The last ship  
 Was out of sight, and there was nothing now  
 For her to see before the night came down  
 Except her father's face. She looked at him 15  
 And found him smiling in the way she feared,  
 And loved the while she feared it. The King took  
 One of her small still hands in one of his  
 That were so large and hard to be so kind,  
 And weighed a question, not for the first time: 20

"Why should it be that I must have a child  
 Whose eyes are wandering always to the north?  
 The north is a bad region full of wolves  
 And bears and hairy men that have no manners.  
 Why should her eyes be always on the north, 25  
 I wonder, when all's here that one requires  
 Of comfort, love, and of expediency?  
 You are not cheered, I see, or satisfied  
 Entirely by the sound of what I say.  
 You are too young, may be, to make yourself 30  
 A nest of comfort and expediency."

"I may be that," she said, and a quick flush  
 Made a pink forage of her laughing face,  
 At which he smiled again. "But not so young  
 As to be told for ever how young I am. 35  
 I have been growing for these eighteen years,  
 And waiting here, for one thing and another.  
 Besides, his manners are as good as yours,  
 And he's not half so hairy as you are,  
 Even though you be the King of Brittany, 40  
 Or the great Jove himself, and then my father."  
 With that she threw her arms around his neck,  
 Throbbing as if she were a child indeed.

"You are no heavier than a cat," said he,  
 "But otherwise you are somewhat like a tiger. 45  
 Relinquish your commendable affection  
 A little, and tell me why it is you dream  
 Of someone coming always from the north.  
 Are there no proper knights or princes else  
 Than one whose eyes, wherever they may be fixed, 50

Are surely not fixed hard on Brittany?  
You are a sort of child, or many sorts,  
Yet also are too high and too essential  
To be much longer the quaint sport and food  
Of shadowy fancies. For a time I've laughed 55  
And let you dream, but I may not laugh always.  
Because he praised you as a child one day,  
And may have liked you as a child one day,  
Why do you stare for ever into the north,  
Over that water, where the good God placed 60  
A land known only to your small white ears?"

"Only because the good God, I suppose,  
Placed England somewhere north of Brittany—  
Though not so far but one may come and go  
As many a time as twice before he dies. 65  
I know that's true, having been told about it.  
I have been told so much about this world  
That I have wondered why men stay in it.  
I have been told of devils that are in it,  
And some right here in Brittany. Griffon 70  
Is one of them; and if he ever gets me,  
I'll pray for the best way to kill myself."

King Howel held his daughter closer to him,  
As if a buried and forgotten fear  
Had come to life and was confronting him 75  
With a new face. "Never you mind the devils,"  
He said, "be they in Brittany or elsewhere.  
They are for my attention, if need be.  
You will affright me and amuse me less  
By saying, if you are ready, how much longer 80  
You are to starve yourself with your delusion  
Of Tristram coming back. He may come back,  
Or Mark, his uncle, who tonight is making  
Another Isolt his queen—the dark Isolt,  
Isolt of Ireland—may be coming back, 85  
Though I'd as lief he would remain at home  
In Cornwall, with his new queen—if he keeps her."

"And who is this far-off Isolt of Ireland?"  
She said, like a thing waiting to be hurt:  
"A creature that one hears of constantly, 90  
And one that no man sees, or none to say so,  
Must be unusual—if she be at all."

"The few men who have told of her to me  
Have told of silence and of Irish pride,

Inhabiting too much beauty for one woman. 95  
 My eyes have never seen her; and as for beauty,  
 My eyes would rather look at yours, my child.  
 And as for Tristram coming back, what then—  
 One of these days? Any one may come back.  
 King Arthur may come back; and as for that, 100  
 Our Lord and Saviour may come back some time,  
 Though hardly all for you. Have you kept hid  
 Some promise or protestation heretofore,  
 That you may shape a thought into a reason  
 For making always of a distant wish 105  
 A dim belief? You are too old for that—  
 If it will make you happy to be told so.  
 You have been told so much." King Howel smiled,  
 And waited, holding her white hands in his.

"I have been told that Tristram will come back," 110  
 She said; "and it was he who told me so.  
 Also I have this agate that he gave me;  
 And I believe his eyes."

"Believe his agate,"

The king said, "for as long as you may save it. 115  
 An agate's a fair plaything for a child,  
 Though not so boundless and immovable  
 In magnitude but that a child may lose it.  
 Since you esteem it such an acquisition,  
 Treasure it more securely, and believe it 120  
 As a bright piece of earth, and nothing more.  
 Believe his agate, and forget his eyes;  
 And go to bed. You are not young enough,  
 I see, to stay awake and entertain  
 Much longer your exaggerated fancies. 125  
 And if he should come back? Would you prepare  
 Upon the ruinous day of his departure  
 To drown yourself, and with yourself his agate?"

Isolt, now on a cushion at his feet,  
 Finding the King's hard knees a meagre pillow, 130  
 Sat upright, thinking. "No I should not do that;  
 Though I should never trust another man  
 So far that I should go away with him.  
 King's daughters, I suppose, are bought and sold,  
 But you would not sell me." 135

"You seize a question  
 As if it were an agate—or a fact,"  
 The King said, laughing at the calm gray eyes



That were so large in the small face before him.  
"I might sell you, perhaps, at a fair bargain. 140  
To play with an illustrious example,  
If Modred were to overthrow King Arthur—  
And there are prophets who see Arthur's end  
In Modred, who's an able sort of reptile—  
And come for you to go away with him, 145  
And to be Queen of Britain, I might sell you,  
Perhaps. You might say prayers that you be sold."

"I may say prayers that you be reasonable  
And serious, and that you believe me so."  
There was a light now in his daughter's eyes 150  
Like none that he remembered having seen  
In eyes before, whereat he paused and heard,  
Not all amused. "He will come back," she said,  
"And I shall wait. If he should not come back,  
I shall have been but one poor woman more 155  
Whose punishment for being born a woman  
Was to believe and wait. You are my King,  
My father, and of all men anywhere,  
Save one, you are the world of men to me.  
When I say this of him you must believe me, 160  
As I believe his eyes. He will come back;  
And what comes then I leave to him, and God."

Slowly the King arose, and with his hands  
He lifted up Isolt, so frail, so light,  
And yet, with all, mysteriously so strong. 165  
He raised her patient face between his hands,  
Observing it as if it were some white  
And foreign flower, not certain in his garden  
To thrive, nor like to die. Then with a vague  
And wavering effect of shaking her 170  
Affectionately back to his own world,  
Which never would be hers, he smiled once more  
And set her free. "You should have gone to bed  
When first I told you. You had best go now,  
And while you are still dreaming. In the morning 175  
Your dreams, if you remember them, will all  
Be less than one bird singing in a tree."

Isolt of the white hands, unchangeable,  
Half childlike and half womanly, looked up  
Into her father's eyes and shook her head, 180  
Smiling, but less for joy than certainty:  
"There's a bird then that I have never seen  
In Brittany; and I have never heard him.

Good night, my father." She went slowly out,  
Leaving him in the gloom. 185

"Good night, my child,  
Good night," he said, scarce hearing his own voice  
For crowded thoughts that were unseizable  
And unforeseen within him. Like Isolt,  
He stood now in the window looking north 190  
Over the misty sea. A seven days' moon  
Was in the sky, and there were a few stars  
That had no fire. "I have no more a child,"  
He thought, "and what she is I do not know.  
It may be fancy and fantastic youth 195  
That ails her now; it may be the sick touch  
Of prophecy concealing disillusion.  
If there were not inwoven so much power  
And poise of sense with all her seeming folly,  
I might assume a concord with her faith 200  
As that of one elected soon to die.  
But surely no infringement of the grave  
In her conceits and her appearances  
Encourages a fear that still is rear;  
And what she is to know, I cannot say. 205  
A changeling down from one of those white stars  
Were more like her than like a child of mine."

Nothing in the cold glimmer of a moon  
Over a still, cold ocean there before him  
Would answer for him in the silent voice 210  
Of time an idle question. So the King,  
With only time for company, stood waiting  
Alone there in the window, looking off  
At the still sea between his eyes and England.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

*Thomas Hardy (1911)*

### AT TEA

The kettle descants in a cosy drone,  
And the young wife looks in her husband's face  
And then at her guest's, and shows in her own  
Her sense that she fills an envied place;  
And the visiting lady is all abloom,  
And says there was never so sweet a room. 5

And the happy young housewife does not know  
 That the woman beside her was first his choice,  
 Till the fates ordained it could not be so . . .  
 Betraying nothing in look or voice, 10  
 The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,  
 And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

## AT THE DRAPER'S

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,  
 But you did not perceive me.  
 Well, when they deliver what you were shown  
 I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said, 5  
 "Oh, I didn't see you come in there—  
 Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I left  
 That you should not notice I'd been there.  
 "You were viewing some lovely things. 10  
*'Soon required for a widow of latest fashion';*  
 And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man  
 Who had to be cold and ashen,

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you  
*'In the last new note in mourning,'* 15  
 As they defined it. So, not to distress you,  
 I left you to your adorning."

## BOY AND FATHER

(From Smoke and Steel)

Carl Sandburg (1920).

The boy Alexander understands his father to be a famous lawyer.  
 The leather law books of Alexander's father fill a room like hay in a barn.  
 Alexander has asked his father to let him build a house like bricklayers build,  
 a house with walls and roofs made of big leather law books.

The rain beats on the windows  
 And the raindrops run down the window glass 5  
 And the raindrops slide off the green blinds down the siding.  
 The boy Alexander dreams of Napoleon in John C. Abbott's history, Napo-  
 leon the grand and lonely man wronged, Napoleon in his life wronged  
 and in his memory wronged.  
 The boy Alexander dreams of the cat Alice saw, the cat fading off into the  
 dark and leaving the teeth of its Cheshire smile lighting the gloom.

Buffaloes, blizzards, way down in Texas, in the panhandle of Texas snuggling close to New Mexico,  
 These creep into Alexander's dreaming by the window when his father talks with strange men about land down in Deaf Smith County. <sup>10</sup>  
 Alexander's father tells the strange men: Five years ago we ran a Ford out on the prairie and chased antelopes.

Only once or twice in a long while has Alexander heard his father say "my first wife" so-and-so and such-and-such.  
 A few times softly the father had told Alexander, "Your mother . . . was a beautiful woman . . . but we won't talk about her."  
 Always Alexander listens with a keen listen when he hears his father mention "my first wife" or "Alexander's mother."

Alexander's father smokes a cigar and the Episcopal rector smokes a cigar and the words come often: mystery of life, mystery of life. <sup>15</sup>  
 These two come into Alexander's head blurry and gray while the rain beats on the windows and the raindrops run down the window glass and the raindrops slide off the green blinds and down the siding.  
 These and: There is a God, there must be a God; how can there be rain or sun unless there is a God?

So from the wrongs of Napoleon and the Cheshire cat smile on to the buffaloes and blizzards of Texas and on to his mother and to God, so the blurry gray rain dreams of Alexander have gone on five minutes, maybe ten, keeping slow easy time to the raindrops on the window glass and the raindrops sliding off the green blinds and down the siding.

## A POISON TREE

*William Blake* (1794)

I was angry with my friend:	And it grew both day and night,	
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.	Till it bore an apple bright,	10
I was angry with my foe:	And my foe beheld it shine,	
I told it not, my wrath did grow.	And he knew that it was mine,—	
And I watered it in fears	5 And into my garden stole	
Night and morning with my tears,	When the night had veiled the pole;	
And I sunned it with smiles	In the morning, glad, I see	15
And with soft deceitful wiles.	My foe outstretched beneath the tree.	

# THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

*William Blake (1794)*

"Love seeketh not itself to please,  
Nor for itself hath any care,  
But for another gives its ease,  
And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay, 5  
Trodden with the cattle's feet.  
But a pebble of the brook  
Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only self to please,  
To bind another to its delight, 10  
Joys in another's loss of ease,  
And builds a hell in heaven's despite."

# SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

*William Wordsworth (1804)*

She was a Phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely Apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; 5  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;  
A dancing Shape, an Image gay, 10  
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet 15  
Sweet records, promises as sweet;  
A Creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food;

For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine;  
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A Traveler between life and death;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill; 26  
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command;  
And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
With something of angelic light. 30

# SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

*William Wordsworth (1799)*

She dwelt among the untrodden ways  
Beside the springs of Dove,  
A maid whom there were none to praise  
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone 5  
Half hidden from the eye!  
—Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be; 10  
But she is in her grave, and, oh,  
The difference to me!

# SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

*George Gordon, Lord Byron (1814)*

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
Thus mellowed to that tender light 5  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the  
less,  
Had half impaired the nameless  
grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face; 10  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that  
brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that  
glow, 15  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

### MAID OF ATHENS

*George Gordon, Lord Byron*  
(1810)

Ζώη μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ

Maid of Athens, ere we part,  
Give, oh, give me back my heart!  
Or, since that has left my breast,  
Keep it now, and take the rest!  
Hear my vow before I go, 5  
Ζώη μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ

By those tresses unconfined,  
Woody by each Aegean wind;  
By those lids whose jetty fringe  
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;  
By those wild eyes like the roe, 11  
Ζώη μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ

By that lip I long to taste;  
By that zone-encircled waist;  
By all the token-flowers that tell 15  
What words can never speak so well;  
By love's alternate joy and woe,  
Ζώη μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ

Maid of Athens! I am gone;  
Think of me, sweet! when alone. 20  
Though I fly to Istanbul,  
Athens holds my heart and soul;  
Can I cease to love thee? No!  
Ζώη μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ

TO—

*Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1821)

One word is too often profaned  
For me to profane it,  
One feeling too falsely disdained  
For thee to disdain it;  
One hope is too like despair 5  
For prudence to smother,  
And pity from thee more dear  
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,  
But wilt thou accept not 10  
The worship the heart lifts above  
And the Heavens reject not,—  
The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar 15  
From the sphere of our sorrow?

### LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

*Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1819)

The fountains mingle with the river  
And the rivers with the ocean,  
The winds of heaven mix for ever  
With a sweet emotion;  
Nothing in the world is single, 5

All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle—  
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another; 10

No sister-flower would be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother:  
And the sunlight clasps the earth;  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—  
What are all these kissings worth, 15  
If thou kiss not me?

## BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART

*John Keats (1820)*

Bright star! would I were steadfast  
as thou art—

Not in lone splendor hung aloft the  
night,

And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Ere-  
mite,

The moving waters at their priestlike  
task 5

Of pure ablution round earth's human  
shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the  
moors—

No—yet still steadfast, still unchange-  
able,

Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening  
breast, 10

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken  
breath,

And so live ever—or else swoon to  
death.

## THE CONSTANT LOVER

*Sir John Suckling (1646)*

Out upon it, I have loved  
Three whole days together!  
And am like to love three more,  
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings 5  
Ere he shall discover  
In the whole wide world again  
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise  
Is due at all to me: 10  
Love with me had made no stays,  
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she  
And that very face, 15  
There had been at least ere this  
A dozen dozen in her place.

## TO MARY UNWIN

*William Cowper* (1792)

The twentieth year is well-nigh past  
 Since first our sky was overcast;  
 And would that this might be the last!  
 My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow, 5  
 I see thee daily weaker grow—  
 'Twas my distress that brought thee  
 low,  
 My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,  
 For my sake restless heretofore, 10  
 Now rust disused, and shine no more;  
 My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil  
 The same kind office for me still,  
 Thy sight now seconds not thy will, 15  
 My Mary!

But well thou play'st the housewife's  
 part,  
 And all thy threads with magic art  
 Have wound themselves about this  
 heart,  
 My Mary! 20

Thy indistinct expressions seem  
 Like language utter'd in a dream;  
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the  
 theme,  
 My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,  
 Are still more lovely in my sight 26  
 Than golden beams of orient light,  
 My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,  
 What sight worth seeing could I  
 see? 30  
 The sun would rise in vain for me,  
 My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline  
 Thy hands their little force resign;  
 Yet, gently prest, press gently mine,  
 My Mary! 36

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st  
 That now at every step thou mov'st  
 Upheld by two; yet still thou lov'st,  
 My Mary! 40

And still to love, though prest with ill,  
 In wintry age to feel no chill,  
 With me is to be lovely still,  
 My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know 45  
 How oft the sadness that I show  
 Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,  
 My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast  
 With much resemblance of the past, 50  
 Thy worn-out heart will break at last,  
 My Mary!



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# THE ARTS

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## THE ARTS AS MOTIVE POWER

*Maxwell Anderson (1939)*

THERE is always something slightly embarrassing about the public statements of writers and artists, for they should be able to say whatever they have to say in their work, and let it go at that. Moreover, the writer or artist who brings a message of any importance to his generation will find it impossible to reduce that message to a bald statement, or even a clearly scientific statement, because the things an artist has to communicate can be said only in symbols, in the symbols of his art. The work of art is a hieroglyph, and the artist's endeavor is to set forth his vision of the world in a series of picture writings which convey meanings beyond the scope of direct statement. There is reason for believing that there is no other way of communicating new concepts save the artist's way, no other way save the artist's way of illuminating new pathways in the mind. Even the mathematician leaves the solid plane of the multiplication table and treads precariously among symbols when he advances toward ideas previously unattained.

It may be that I am trying, at this moment, to reduce to plain statement an intuitive faith of my own which cannot be justified by logic and which may lose, even for me, some of its iridescence when examined under a strong light by many searching eyes. For though the question I meant to take up was only the utility of prizes for artistic excellence, I can find no approach to that question save through a definition of the artist's faith as I see it, and no definition of that faith without an examination of the artist's place in his universe, his relation to the national culture and the dependence of a nation on its culture for coherence and enduring significance.

Let me begin then, quite simply and honestly, even naïvely, with a picture of the earth as I see it. The human race, some two billion strong, finds itself embarked on a curious voyage among the stars, riding a planet which must have set out from somewhere, and must be going somewhere, but which was cut adrift so long ago that its origin is a matter of speculation and its future beyond prophecy. Our planet is of limited area, and our race is divided into rival nations and cultures that grow and press on one another, fighting for space and the products of the ground.

We are ruled by men like ourselves, men of limited intelligence, with no foreknowledge of what is to come, and hampered by the constant necessity

of maintaining themselves in power by placating our immediate selfish demands. There have been men among us from time to time who had more wisdom than the majority, and who laid down precepts for the conduct of a man's brief life. Some of them claimed inspiration from beyond our earth, from spirits or forces which we cannot apprehend with our five senses. Some of them speak of gods that govern our destinies, but no one of them has had proof of his inspiration or of the existence of a god. Nevertheless, there have been wise men among them, and we have taken their precepts to heart and taken their gods and their inspiration for granted.

Each man and woman among us, with a short and harried life to live, must decide for himself what attitude he will take toward what they have said, and toward the shifting patterns of government, justice, religion, business, morals and personal conduct. We are hampered as well as helped in these decisions by every prejudice of ancestry and race, but no man's life is ready-made for him. Whether he chooses to conform or not to conform, every man's religion is his own, every man's politics is his own, every man's vice or virtue is his own, for he alone makes decisions for himself. Every other freedom in this world is restricted, but the individual mind is free according to its strength and desire. The mind has no master save the master it chooses.

Yet it must make its choices, now as always, without sufficient knowledge and without sufficient wisdom, without certainty of our origin, without certainty of what undiscovered forces lie beyond known scientific data, without certainty of the meaning of life, if it has a meaning, and without an inkling of our racial destiny. In matters of daily and yearly living, we have a few, often fallible, rules of thumb to guide us, but on all larger questions the darkness and silence about us is complete.

Or almost complete. Complete save for an occasional prophetic voice, an occasional gleam of scientific light, an occasional extraordinary action which may make us doubt that we are utterly alone and completely futile in this incomprehensible journey among the constellations. From the beginning of our story men have insisted that they had a destiny to fulfill—that they were part of a gigantic scheme which was understood somewhere, though they themselves might never understand it.

There are no proofs of this. There are only indications—in the idealism of children and young men, in the sayings of such teachers as Christ and Buddha, in the vision of the world we glimpse in the hieroglyphics of the masters of the great arts and in the discoveries of pure science, itself an art, as it pushes away the veils of fact to reveal new powers, new laws, new mysteries, new goals for the eternal dream. The dream of the race is that it may make itself better and wiser than it is, and every great philosopher or artist who has ever appeared among us has turned his face away from what man is toward whatever seems to him most godlike that man may become.

Whether the steps proposed are immediate or distant, whether he speaks in the simple parables of the New Testament or the complex musical symbols of Bach and Beethoven, the message is always to the effect that men are not

essentially as they are but as they imagine and as they wish to be. The geologists and anthropologists, working hand in hand, tracing our ancestry to a humble little animal with a rudimentary forebrain which grew with use and need, reinforce the constant faith of prophet and artist. We need more intelligence and more sensitivity if ever an animal needed anything. Without them we are caught in a trap of selfish interest, international butchery, and a creed of survival that periodically sacrifices the best to the worst, and the only way out that I can see is a race with a better brain and superior inner control. The artist's faith is simply a faith in the human race and its gradual acquisition of wisdom.

Now it is always possible that he is mistaken or deluded in what he believes about his race, but I myself accept his creed as my own. I make my spiritual code out of my limited knowledge of great music, great poetry and great plastic and graphic arts, including with these, not above them, such wisdom as the Sermon on the Mount and the last chapter of Ecclesiastes. The test of a man's inspiration for me is not whether he spoke from a temple or the stage of a theatre, from a martyr's fire or a garden in Hampstead. The test of a message is its continuing effect on the minds of men over a period of generations.

The world we live in is given meaning and dignity, is made an endurable habitation, by the great spirits who have preceded us and set down their records of nobility or torture or defeat in blazons and symbols which we can understand. I accept these not only as prophecy, but as direct motivation toward some far goal of racial aspiration. He who meditates with Plato, or finds himself shaken by Lear's "five-fold never" over Cordelia, or climbs the steep and tragic stairway of symphonic music, is certain to be better, both intellectually and morally, for the experience.

The nobler a man's interests the better citizen he is. And if you ask me to define nobility, I can answer only by opposites, that it is not buying and selling, or betting on the races. It might be symbolized by such a figure as a farmer boy in Western Pennsylvania plowing corn through a long afternoon and saying over and over to himself certain musical passages out of Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus." He might plow his corn none too well, he might be full of what we used to call original sin, but he carries in his brain a catalytic agent the presence of which fosters ripening and growth. It may be an impetus that will advance him or his sons an infinitesimal step along the interminable ascent.

The ascent, if we do climb, is so slow, so gradual, so broken, that we can see little or no evidence of it between the age of Homer and our own time. The evidence we have consists in a few mountain peaks of achievement, the age of Pericles, the centuries of Dante and Michelangelo, the reign of Elizabeth in England, the century and a half of music in Germany, peaks and highlands from which the masters seem to have looked forward into the distance far beyond our plodding progress. Between these heights lie long valleys

of mediocrity and desolation, and, artistically, at least, we appear to be miles beneath the upper levels traversed behind us. It must be our hope as a nation that either in pure art or in pure science we may arrive at our own peak of achievement, and earn a place in human history by making one more climb above the clouds.

The individual, the nation and the race are all involved together in this effort. Even in our disillusioned era, when fixed stars of belief fall from our sky like a rain of meteors, we find that men cling to what central verities they can rescue or manufacture, because without a core of belief neither man nor nation has courage to go on. This is no figure of speech, no sanctimonious adjuration—it is a practical, demonstrable fact which all men realize as they add to their years. We must have a personal, a national and a racial faith, or we are dry bones in a death valley, waiting for the word that will bring us life.

Mere rationalism is mere death. Mere scientific advance without purpose is an advance toward the waterless mirage and the cosmic scavengers. The doctrine of Machiavelli is a fatal disease to the citizen or the State. The national conscience is the sum of personal conscience; the national culture, the sum of personal culture—and the lack of conscience is an invitation to destruction; the lack of culture, an assurance that we shall not even be remembered.

No doubt I shall be accused of talking a cloudy philosophy, of mixed metaphors and fantasy, but unless I misread my history, the artist has usually been wiser even about immediate aims than the materialist or the enthusiast for sweeping political reform. The artist is aware that man is not perfect, but that he seeks perfection. The materialist sees that men are not perfect, and erects his philosophy on their desire for selfish advantage. He fails quickly, always, because men refuse to live by bread alone.

The utopian sees that men seek perfection and sets out to achieve it or legislate it for them. He fails because he cannot build an unselfish state out of selfish citizens, and he who asks the impossible gets nothing. The concepts of truth and justice are variables approaching an imaginary limit which we shall never see; nevertheless, those who have lost their belief in truth and justice and no longer try for them are traitors to the race, traitors to themselves, advocates of the dust.

To my mind a love of truth and justice is bound up in men with a belief in their destiny; and the belief in their destiny is of one piece with national and international culture. The glimpse of the godlike in man occasionally vouchsafed in a work of art or prophecy is the vital spark in a world that would otherwise stand stock still or slip backward down the grade, devoid of motive power.

For national growth and unity the artist's vision is the essential lodestone without which there is no coherence. A nation is not a nation until it has a

culture which deserves and receives affection and reverence from the people themselves. Our culture in this country has been largely borrowed or sectional or local; what we need now to draw us together and make us a nation is a flowering of the national arts, a flowering of the old forms in this new soil, a renaissance of our own.

How much the gardeners may contribute to the making of such a new garden we can only guess, for genius is not readily producible, cannot be forced or anticipated, cannot be bred from known varieties. It is our hope that it can be encouraged, and the prizes that are given for excellence in the theatre, in music and in painting do seem to have a kind of effectiveness. A prize is more effective than mere monetary success, for it confers leadership, lends a sense of direction and imparts a dignity to the attempt which is not bestowed by popular acclaim or ready sales.

Let us remember always that no award is final, and that current opinion is subject to the veto of next year, next decade and next century. Sophocles did not win first place in the annual competition with his "Oedipus Tyrannus," though it seems to us now the best of the Greek tragedies. We can only judge honestly for ourselves, give what encouragement we can to what seems to us the best in our generation, and hope that some of the work produced by our contemporaries will grow and not disintegrate with the passing of time.

Looking ahead, myself, I still have no more than a hope that our nation will some time take as great a place in the cultural history of the world as has been taken by Greece or Italy or England. So far we have, perhaps, hardly justified even the hope. But let us do what we can to encourage our nascent arts, for if we are to be remembered as more than a mass of people who lived and fought wars and died, it is for our arts that we will be remembered. The captains and the kings depart; the great fortunes wither, leaving no trace; the multitudes blow away like locusts, the records and barriers go down. The rulers, too, are forgotten unless they have had the forethought to surround themselves with singers and makers, poets and artificers in things of the mind.

This is not immortality, of course. So far as I know there is no immortality. But the arts make the longest reach toward permanence, create the most enduring monuments, project the farthest, widest, deepest influence of which human prescience and effort are capable. The Greek religion is gone, but Aeschylus remains. Catholicism shrinks back toward the Papal State, but the best of medieval art perishes only where its pigments were perishable. The Lutheranism of Bach retains little content for us, but his music is indispensable. And there is only one condition that makes possible a Bach, an Aeschylus or a Michelangelo—it is a national interest in and enthusiasm for the art he practices.

The supreme artist is only the apex of a pyramid; the pyramid itself must be built of artists and art lovers, apprentices and craftsmen so deeply imbued with a love for the art they follow or practice that it has become for them a

means of communication with whatever has been found highest and most admirable in the human spirit. To the young people of this country I wish to say, if you now hesitate on the threshold of your maturity, wondering what rewards you should seek, wondering perhaps whether there are any rewards beyond the opportunity to feed and sleep and breed, turn to the art which has moved you most readily, take what part in it you can, as participant, spectator, secret practitioner or hanger-on and waiter at the door. Make your living any way you can, but neglect no sacrifice at your chosen altar.

It may break your heart, it may drive you half mad, it may betray you into unrealizable ambitions or blind you to mercantile opportunities with its wandering fires. But it will fill your heart before it breaks it; it will make you a person in your own right; it will open the temple doors to you and enable you to walk with those who have come nearest among men to what men may sometimes be. If the time arrives when our young men and women lose their extravagant faith in the dollar and turn to the arts, we may then become a great nation, nurturing great artists of our own, proud of our own culture and unified by that culture into a civilization worthy of our unique place on this rich and lucky continent between its protecting seas.

## MY LIFE IS AN OPEN BOOK

(*From Reading I've Liked*)

*Clifton Fadiman (1941)*

IS IT some constant nervous need for reassurance that makes human beings so alert to point out the capacities that separate them from the lower animals? Thus, we have rationality (I am hastily wiping that silly grin off my face), and the beasts do not. We use tools; they don't. Man, some solemn ass once pointed out, is an animal that laughs; animals do not laugh. We have long memories; beasts, save for the proverbial elephants, do not. We make war on each other and have at last, after much trial and error, learned how to exterminate our species, whereas the animals have to depend for their own destruction largely on the mere accidents of nature.

These are some of the criteria which man has set up to demonstrate his superiority. Criteria being cheap, I should like to add another. Man, modern man, is a word-making and word-reading animal. . . . Writing, and more especially reading, represent habits that we engage in constantly almost from the cradle to the grave. Civilized man is a reader. Irrevocably he would appear to be committed to the scanning of small black marks on plane surfaces. It is, when you come to think it over, an odd gesture, like the movement the camera catches of the heads of a tennis audience. But there it is—we are readers, and it's too late to change.

Some are more delivered over to the habit than others. With them read-

ing has become as closely interwoven with life in general as, let us say, the killing of defenseless animals has become interwoven with the life of the (former) British hunting aristocracy. In both cases a hobby has developed into a passion, and this passion colors all others. There is no doubt, for instance, that a fox-slaughtering man makes love in a manner subtly different from the way a non-fox-slaughtering man does. The same must be true of an omnivorous reader and a more desultory one. In some cases the impulse to read (and reflect on what one has read) dominates completely. Then you get queer but interesting specimens like Robert Burton, who wrote *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. In such a case reading has become a kind of disease, a fascinating, proliferating cancer of the mind.

Between Robert Burton and the Nazi who said, "When I hear the word 'culture' I draw my revolver," stand the great majority of us, ranging all the way from the casual reader who can take his book or let it alone, to the reading enthusiast who knows that books are but a part of life but would feel a serious void if deprived of that part . . . Those to whom reading is fated to become important generally shake hands with books early. But this is not always true. Many distinguished writers were blockheads at their letters until a comparatively advanced age. I think, however, of an undistinguished one who was a busy reader at four: me. My first book was entitled *The Overall Boys*. *The Overall Boys* was and doubtless still is a rousing tale of two devoted brothers, aged five and seven, and their monosyllabic adventures on a farm. The style was of transparent lucidity. I found *The Overall Boys* a perfect job then, and, looking back, I haven't yet been able to detect any flaws in it. I remember it in greater detail and certainly with greater pleasure than I do the 576-page novel I finished yesterday. At four I was convinced that *The Overall Boys* represented the peak of the art of narrative and sternly rejected all attempts to make me continue my reading adventures. This resistance endured for a lengthy period—about a week, I should say. Then I broke down, tried another book, and have been doing the same sort of thing ever since. But all devout readers will agree that my first literary judgment was correct. Everything after *The Overall Boys* has been anticlimax. The same new world can never be discovered twice. One's first book, kiss, home run is always the best.

Between the ages of four and ten I read but moderately and with absolute catholicity. We had in our household the usual meaningless miscellany that accumulates if the parents are not specifically literary. Thus I read whatever lay behind the glassed-in shelves of two dreary-looking black-walnut bookcases. I devoured the standard "boys' books" scornfully discarded by my elder brother. I bored my way through at least ten volumes of an unreadable set of historical novels by some worthy named Mühlbach, I think, and got absolutely nothing from them; the same result would be achieved were I to read them now. I read an adventure story about the Belgian Congo that made an anti-imperialist out of me when I was eight; I have seen no reason

to change my views since then. Something called *Buck Jones at Annapolis* similarly made me permanently skeptical of the warrior virtues.

I read an odd collection of "daring" books that many families of the period kept around the house, often hidden under lock and key: Reginald Wright Kaufman's *The House of Bondage*; something called *The Yoke*, which was on the same order; Maupassant complete, though this may not have been until I had reached the mature estate of twelve or thirteen; and similar luridness. These had no effect of any sort on me, as far as I can recollect, though I suppose a psychoanalyst could, at a price, make me tell a different story.

The child reader is an automatic selecting mechanism. What he is not emotionally ready to absorb, his mental system quietly rejects. When in later years I became a teacher of literature I could never see the point in censoring my young charges' extracurricular reading. Very often the mothers (never the fathers) of my high-school students would ask me to explain my refusal to forbid Mary or John to read James Joyce's *Ulysses*. I never offered any satisfactory explanation except to say that if John or Mary were ready to understand *Ulysses* then they were ready to understand *Ulysses*, which was a Good Thing. If they were not ready to understand it, which was apt to be the case, then *Ulysses* would at most waste their time, on which I was not prepared to set any exaggerated value. Often an anxious mother would inquire whether I didn't agree that the last chapter (Mrs. Leopold Bloom's uncorseted memories of an exuberant life) was shocking. My reply may have been frivolous, but it seems to me it contained the germ of the truth: that she found it shocking mainly because she had not had the chance to read *Ulysses* when she was seventeen, wherein Mary or John had an advantage over her. This generally closed, without settling, the controversy.

As you can see, part of my four-to-ten reading was unorthodox for a small child (I forgot to tell you that I also toddled through a volume of Ibsen, and found him impenetrable) but the unorthodoxies had no effect whatsoever. What I really liked was what any small boy or girl would like—what I was ready for. This included, of course, a moderate amount of what is called trash—the Rover Boys, Horatio Alger, Wild West yarns, Jack Harkaway, the whole conventional canon of those days.

I say trash. Actually such books are "trash" only by standards which should not be applied to children's reading. They have the incalculable value that listening to perfectly inane adult conversation holds for children: they increase the child's general awareness. They provide admittedly rough paradigms of character, motivation, life experiences. That is why it seems to me that the trash of my generation was superior to the trash of today. I submit that *The Rover Boys in the Everglades* and *Frank on a Gunboat* are preferable to Superman and his kind on two counts: they were cleanly and clearly written, and their characters were credible and not entirely unrelated to the child's experience. When I was nine I could learn something



interesting about life from even such highly colored affairs as the Frank Merriwell series, but I know that my son can learn nothing whatsoever of genuine interest (that is, which he can check against the expanding universe within himself) from the comics. I believe firmly that the current juvenile literature of the impossible is meretricious compared with the honest hack-work my own generation enjoyed. I also think that the kids are about ready to kick over this thriller fare in favor of something saner and more natural.

During my younger years, mainly between the ages of eight and ten, I, like my contemporaries, read a few "good" books, though they were not recommended to me as good. Such recommendations are hardly necessary. The child, if reasonably intelligent, has almost infallible good taste. Probably his good taste reaches its peak at that time. We all felt, when we encountered *Tom Sawyer* or, to hit a lower level, Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy* or, on a still lower level, that fine New England classic *Lem* (is it still read?) that these books had something not possessed by *The Pony Rider Boys in the Ozarks*. It wasn't that they were more exciting, for sometimes they weren't, but that they were more "real." The other books were read eagerly and with joy, and then forgotten—indeed, they were read to be forgotten, to be "finished." But *Tom Sawyer* was something you caught yourself remembering a week later, and a year later. I know now, of course, the reason the child feels these books is that the authors felt them. It is as simple as that. That is why the so-called "better" juveniles that flood the bookdealers' shelves every year—the skillfully constructed, highly educational, carefully suited-to-age, morally sanitary, psychologically impeccable children's books—don't really make much of a dent on the child's consciousness. They are constructed for "the market." I don't mean the commercial market, but the market that is supposed to be the child's brain, as if that brain were a kind of transaction center in which each transaction was expressible in definite educational quanta.

The trouble with these juveniles is that their authors are greatly interested in children and not at all interested in themselves. Now, when Mark Twain wrote *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* he never stopped to figure out whether his "boy psychology" was correct, or whether his story was properly adapted to a given age level. He wrote because he was passionately interested in himself, and the Mississippi River in himself, and the boy still alive in himself. Children ever since have unconsciously felt this intense reality, and that's what they've loved.

They've loved *Huckleberry Finn* even though it is over their heads, or written in old-fashioned English or dialect, or concerned with events that happened a long time ago. The machine-turned juveniles of our own day are "carefully adapted to the child's understanding," and that isn't what the child really wants. The child wants to be puzzled—not too much, but just enough. He doesn't want the characters' motivations to be automatically

clear to him. He wants the satisfaction of figuring them out. As a matter of fact, the child delights as much in ambiguity as he does in clarity. *Alice in Wonderland* is still an overwhelming favorite, not because it's so funny but because it's so strange; it's a wonderful, gorgeous puzzle.

In this connection I always think of a comment my great and good friend Hendrik van Loon made to me one day. Going over, for editorial purposes, one of his manuscripts intended primarily for children, I pointed out to him the large number of long, difficult words which, as I thought, youngsters would never understand. He merely said, "I put them in on purpose." I learned later what he meant: that long words tickle the fancy of children, that they like the slight atmosphere of mystery distilled by a really bang-up polysyllable.

I think also that children—just ordinary, wholesome children, not book-worms—are more sensitive to beautiful writing than is generally supposed. They'll read reams of careless prose with great enjoyment, but when they come across the real thing, they know it. I don't know how they know it, but they do. My own son is not overfond of books. Rather than forgo an airplane flight he would willingly see the Forty-second Street library vanish in flames. Two years ago I tried the young barbarian—he was about seven—on *The Wind in the Willows*, and he could make nothing of it. I tried him again some few months ago. He finished it with absorbed calm, clapped the book to, and said with finality, "Now, that's what I call well written!" He has never said this about any other book he's read, many of which he has "enjoyed" more. The fact is that *The Wind in the Willows* is the best-written book he has read so far, and he somehow knew it, though he had never been given any hint to affect his judgment.

The smooth confections the publishers turn out today are not well written in the sense that *The Wind in the Willows* is. They are merely correctly written. The authors in most cases have unconsciously curbed any impulse toward style, because style would express themselves, whereas they are supposed to be writing for the sake of the children. If they would forget all about the children and set down freely and lovingly the child in themselves, they might by some glorious accident produce masterpieces. *Little Women* was not written for little women or little men or little anybodies; it was the expression of a passionate memory. When Louisa May Alcott set herself to produce "juveniles," the result was often unsatisfactory, except when her native genius outwitted her conscious resolutions.

I am a firm believer in the newer methods of understanding and handling children. But it is arguable that they have made difficult the creation of a twentieth-century *Little Women* or *Alice in Wonderland*. Such books are the product not of knowledge, or even of wisdom, but of a kind of dream life, a dreaming-back to childhood on the part of the writer. That dream life and "child psychology" do not mix. That perhaps is why the modern child classics are not to be found in books at all, but in the cartoons of Walt

Disney, master of an art newer, naïver, less touched by "science" than is the art of literature.

This has been a long and prosy digression, and while I'm at it, I'd like to make it a trifle longer. One of the games bibliomaniacs play in their weaker moments is the game of Century-Hencery, or literary prophecy. It's a harmless sport, the best part of it being that there can never be a loser. Here's how it works: You list the ten books you believe will be most widely read and generally admired a hundred or five hundred or a thousand years from now. Then you defend your choices. Making the unwarrantable assumption that in 2441 our civilization will still be recognizably related to that of 1941, I will now set down the ten works of literary imagination produced by the English-speaking race that I believe will be most universally alive (not merely admired in the schoolroom) five hundred years from now. Here they are, in no special order:

The Plays of William Shakespeare  
*Moby Dick*  
*Gulliver's Travels*  
*Robinson Crusoe*  
*Alice in Wonderland*  
*Huckleberry Finn*  
*Little Women*  
Some novel of Charles Dickens, probably  
*David Copperfield* or *Pickwick Papers*  
*Treasure Island*  
The Mother Goose Rhymes

It is possible that in constructing this list I have been ingenious rather than ingenuous. Whether by accident or design it reflects one of my favorite theories—that the gods tend to grant immortality to those books which, in addition to being great, are loved by children. For mark well that only two books out of the ten—Shakespeare and *Moby Dick*—cannot, generally speaking, be enjoyed by youngsters. Of the remaining eight, seven are usually ranked as children's favorites. My point is simple: as the generations pass, children's tastes change more slowly than do those of grownups. They are not affected by the ukases of critics or the whims of literary fashion. Thus Shakespeare was not universally admired by the eighteenth century and again may not be (though I'd place a small bet against that possibility) by the twenty-third. But the rhymes of Mother Goose—to my mind literature, even if of a simple order—have suffered no diminution of popularity and, being unmoved by the winds of literary doctrine, are not likely to suffer any.

This is what happens: All children who read at all are introduced at a fairly early age to, let us say, *Robinson Crusoe*. Most of them like it. Later on they meet it again in school. They are told it is literature, and its hold

on their minds is re-enforced. Still later, in adult life, they may encounter it again, when they are ripe to see in it qualities not apparent to them as children. Any possible resistance to accepting Robinson Crusoe as a great book had been broken down years ago during their childhood. Thus *Robinson Crusoe's* prestige remains undimmed. But a classic of greater artistic weight, such as *Paradise Lost*, does not enjoy the advantage of having been liked by readers as children. It is read by a small, select group of adults (college students) and so never passes into the consciousness of the generality. I do not mean that Milton will not be read five hundred years from now. I mean he will not be a casually accepted, generally enjoyed classic as I think *Little Women* or even *Treasure Island* (the most uncertain item, by the way, on my list) is apt to be. But remember, the book must be literature to begin with. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* will live, but A. R. Wyss' *The Swiss Family Robinson* is already dying.

We talk a great deal about the Greek classics. Yet what Greek classic has really penetrated among us? Not Plato surely, or any of the dramatists, but Homer and more particularly the simple, beautiful Greek myths that are read with pleasure by each generation of children. Similarly, I think Perrault and *The Three Musketeers* will outlast Proust and Stendhal, and Grimm's fairy tales still be widely read when Goethe is forgotten. If you wish to live long in the memory of men, perhaps you should not write for them at all. You should write what their children will enjoy. Or, to put it in another way and use a phrase that I think belongs to Lewis Mumford, a book already has one leg on immortality's trophy when "the words are for children and the meanings are for men."

May I make one or two further random comments on this list? Note that three titles—*Moby Dick*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Treasure Island*—have no women characters to speak of, and several of the others depend hardly at all on romantic interest. I do not believe that love, commonly considered one of the great staples of literature, tends as a subject to have any supreme preservative value. It is Dickens' sentiment and humor, not his lovers, that attract us. It is hardly the most romantic of Shakespeare's plays that stand highest in popular esteem. And Melville, in providing his masterpiece with an all-male cast, knew what he was doing.

Finally, if I were asked to make a wild stab at the one book likely to outlast the nine others, I would name *Alice in Wonderland*. This does not mean it is the "best" book on the list, for obviously it is not. In the end the best survives, but the best of the best does not necessarily survive longest. Mankind will cling to what it admires, but even more fiercely will it cling to what it loves. And what we love perhaps above all else (as Dr. Freud pointed out in other and more dismaying connections) is ourselves as children. That is why I think it quite conceivable that Lewis Carroll will be read at some remote future time when Shakespeare is no more remembered than, let us say, Plautus and Terence are today. Twenty centuries from now

Shakespeare may be entirely owned and operated by scholars. But I do not see why people should not still be laughing and exclaiming over *Alice in Wonderland*. Among the few things resistant to the tooth of time, great fantasy is one, and great fantasy is always the special possession of children.

I seem to have abandoned myself some pages back. I had just reached the age of ten. Between ten and seventeen I did the major bulk of my reading. I have never read as many books (I don't mean manuscripts) per year since, nor do I expect to in the future. Those were the splendid years, and it is my notion that they are the splendid years of most devoted readers. After seventeen (in some cases a year or two later) the books choose you, not you the books. You read within limits. Reading becomes a program. You read as part of your college curriculum, or to gain knowledge in a specific field, or to be able to bore your neighbor at dinner-table conversation. Adult reading is usually purposive. In my own case—I shall speak of this later on—it is more than purposive. I make a living by it.

Even the reading done during one's college years lacks the spontaneity, the high waywardness of one's pre-adolescent and adolescent reading. It circles around the classroom. It consists of authors recommended by authority or who you feel should be "covered." Or it has to do with books you know a good deal about in advance, one of the most effective ways to spoil one's reading pleasure. Such reading may be mentally stimulating or socially useful. It may benefit you in a dozen ways. But it is not an adventure in quite the same sense that reading in your second decade so often is.

I am not, in this random biblio-autobiography, proposing to list the books I have read. Nothing could be duller or less useful, except when he who does the listing owns a mind whose operations are really of interest to mankind, as was the case, for example, with John Stuart Mill. All I am here endeavoring to do is to outline some of the processes whereby an average person became an above-the-average reader, which is what I immodestly claim to be. To understand these processes a mere catalogue of titles is of no avail.

Yet I would like to list a few names, mainly to indicate the kind of writer that, as I recall, influenced the more bookish boys and girls of my generation. Shaw, Galsworthy, Bennett, Conrad, Merrick, Barrie, Moore, Dunsany, Yeats, Synge, Swinnerton, Chesterton, Meredith, Wilde, Hewlett, Gissing, Zangwill, and above all H. G. Wells—these, to confine the list to Englishmen only, are a few of the authors I remember devouring from my tenth to my eighteenth year, miscomprehending many, overprizing some, but getting from all an exultant sense of discovery, a peak-in-Darien thrill rarely enjoyed since.

The secret of second-decade reading, of course, is that you are not really finding out what Shaw thinks or Conrad feels, but what you think and you feel. Shaw and Conrad and the rest are but handy compasses to guide you

through the fascinating jungle of your young self. When I read Wells' *Tono-Bungay* at fourteen or fifteen, I found myself saying in delight, "But that's just the way I feel!" When I now read Thomas Mann's *Joseph* story I find myself thinking how true it is to the experience of men in general. There is a difference in the quality of the emotion. The grown-up emotion may be larger and wiser (and probably more pompous), but the boyish one is unique just because it is so utterly, innocently self-centered.

During this adolescent period of my reading life I had a lucky break. My brother, five years my senior and a student at Columbia College, was at the time taking a conventional survey course that used a sound standard anthology known, I think, as *Century Readings in English Literature*, edited by Cunliffe, Pyre, and Young. For some reason, possibly a mild fraternal sadism, he made me take the course along with him—he at college, I at home. The whole thing was over my head—I was fourteen—but when I had finished my *Century Readings*, which took a year, I had at least a hazy notion of the course and development, from *Beowulf* to Stevenson, of the most magnificent, after the Greek, of all literatures. I remember writing essays, perhaps no more interminable than my subjects, on Hakluyt and Spenser. I am still unable to dislodge from my memory—which is not a good one—odd lines of verse from subminor poets like Drayton. That is all of no account. The important thing is that I got through my head at an early age a few simple truths: that the proper reading of a good writer requires energy and application; that reading is not mere "diversion"; that it is impossible to admire writing you do not understand; that understanding it does not destroy but rather enhances its beauty; that unless a writer's mind is superior to, more complicated than, your own, it is a bore to read him. (That is why I never recommend a book to a person if it is on his own mental level.)

I learned also that daydreaming and intelligent reading do not go together. There is a story told by Dr. Sandor Ferenczi, the psychoanalyst, about a Hungarian aristocrat who, while devouring a quick lunch between trains, was recognized by a boorish acquaintance.

"My dear Count! How are you?"

"Umph."

"And how is the Countess?"

"Dead."

"How shocking! It must be terrible for your daughter."

"She's dead."

"But your son—"

"Dead! Everybody's dead when I'm eating!"

During my all-out period everybody was dead when I was reading. Most children and adolescents know this magical secret of concentration, though it is not till they are older and duller that they realize it was magical.

I remember that, when I was fourteen, we lived about two miles from the nearest library. I had a choice. I could cycle there, borrow my books, and cycle back in a very few minutes—but those few minutes were lost to reading. Or, if I wished, I could walk to the library, reading the last fifty or seventy-five pages of my calculatedly unfinished book en route, make my borrowings, and walk back, reading a new volume on the way. I usually preferred the latter procedure. It is no trick at all to read while walking, to step off and onto curbs with unconscious skill, to avoid other pedestrians while your eyes are riveted to the page. There was a special pleasure in it: I had outwitted Father Time. I think Providence meant me to be an ambulant reader, for I never once even stumbled. But one afternoon when I was cycling home from the library with my wire basket full of books, I was hit from behind by a car and sent sprawling.

This absorption, this "losing yourself" in a book, though clearly quite remote from "practical life" (for children "practical life" is simply what grownups want them to do), is not daydreaming. The child does not interpose a continuous, fuzzy, wavering screen of personal desires and wishful visions between himself and the page. On the contrary, he and the page are one. The Victorian female, with whom novel reading was a disease, was the real daydreamer. For her, reading became a drug, a kind of literary marijuana, an instrumentality for the production of needed visions. The child's hearty relation to his book is devoid of this sick quality.

Well, the course my brother gave me, via that blessed trinity Cunliffe, Pyre, and Young, was calculated to make me understand that literature, beyond helping one to discover oneself, has a higher, more impersonal function. It is a challenge issued by a higher mind, the author's, to a lower mind, the reader's. Even if the challenge is not met, much pleasure may still result. But if it is met, or if a sincere attempt to meet it is made, a finer, rarer pleasure is experienced. If you read for pure diversion, well and good, but if you read for any other purpose, always read above yourself. One of the reasons for the general mental fuzziness of most "cultivated" people we know is that publishers have become too shrewd. They have learned, the cunning little fellows, just how to temper their books to the lamb-like mental innocence of their readers. The result is that every week we are deluged with books which, the publishers assure us, we can understand. It is quite true. We can understand them, all too easily. It would be much better for us if now and then we read a book just a few rungs beyond our mental capacities in their most relaxed state.

My second-decade reading—and I think this is sadly true of most of us—was in this sense educationally more valuable than any I have done since, with certain notable (and I shall note them later) exceptions. During adolescence our feeling of bewilderment and insecurity tends to be greater than at any other time. Hence the need to know, to learn, is greater. Therefore whatever reading is done is intense. It is utterly assimilated. We pay absorbed attention

to it, as we would to the instructions of an expert before venturing into a trackless forest.

It seems to me that in my late teens I did more "heavy" reading and digested it more thoroughly than at any succeeding period. In this connection I recall two antithetical experiments I made extending over an interval of six months. The first was an experiment in difficult reading. The other was an experiment in nonreading.

One summer I decided to spend my evenings reading only "hard" books. I went at it with the humorless obstinacy of a sixteen-year-old—and I was more humorless and more obstinate than most. I staggered wildly through stuff like Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody*, Taine's *History of English Literature*, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It was enough for a book to seem important and forbidding—I read it at once. No novels, no light literature of any sort, no magazines for three solid months—hot months, too. Now, as I look back on this extravagant experiment, it seems like the disagreeable behavior of a young prig. Yet I was not really priggish; I didn't read for show-off purposes. I read my Ueberweg as a challenge to myself, as a test, as a deliberate gesture, if you will, of self-punishment. The boy of sixteen by overexercise will punish his body deliberately just to see how much it can take. That same boy may punish his mind in the same way. It is a kind of initiation ceremony that he performs upon himself, a queer, grotesque test of approaching manhood. Sometimes he will decide to go right through *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

The notable part of the experience is that just because that summer's reading came out of a powerful emotional impulse it has stuck with me, as more formal reading, particularly that done as part of my school work, has not. Also, it left me with a taste for a certain kind of "difficult" reading, a taste which, because I am a book reviewer, I rarely have an opportunity to indulge. This does not mean that I read heavy books with ease. On the contrary, I have to go through painful mental struggles to understand them, but the struggle still gives me an odd satisfaction, which I know has something to do with that lunatic summer I spent perusing nothing but huge volumes several miles above my head.

Today, for example, the books I look forward with most pleasure to reading and reviewing are books of popular science, of the Hogben-Julian Huxley-Eddington type. I am not really competent to judge them, but I like to read them, perhaps primarily because for me—I am a scientific illiterate—they present challenging difficulties. It may be an illusion, but I always feel, when I have finished a book of this sort, that I have "got" something out of it. I hardly ever get this feeling from a novel or a conventional biography.

Well, that was Experiment Number One. The second was its polar opposite. I decided to spend three months reading nothing at all, not even a daily newspaper. (The three months coincided with a long absence from school, so



the conditions for the experiment were at their optimum.) Now, why did I want to do this? It was again a matter of self-testing. I felt I had grown too dependent upon other people's ideas. The only way I could perceive to cure myself of this dependence was to abjure other people's ideas completely. The mental life of the adolescent is frequently characterized by this oscillatory quality. He can find out what his real nature is only by leaping from one extreme to the other.

And so for three months I read, as nearly as I can recall, virtually nothing. It was by no means a fruitless experiment, and to those held too tightly in the grip of the reading habit I heartily recommend it. The effect is purgative. The mind disgorges a good deal of waste and clutter, it slows down, for a time it seems vacant. Then gradually it fills again, this time not with the myriad, secondhand impressions induced by nonstop reading, but with the few clear ideas and desires that reflect more accurately your true self. The experience, in addition to being cleansing, is humbling; you realize how sparse is the net content of your mind.

I have known men and women who read so voraciously and continuously that they never have the time or opportunity to discover who they really are. Indeed, I suspect it is precisely because they prefer not to make that discovery that they cling so limpetlike to books. I suppose this is better for them than alcohol or hasheesh, but it is not very different. All of us, I am sure, have noticed people who suffer from reader's fidgets. If there is a book, a magazine, any piece of print within easy reach, they will at once take it up, idly, without real intent to peruse it, but out of a kind of mechanical compulsion. They will do this while they are talking to you, while you are talking to them, while engaged in some other activity. They are victims of print. Perhaps some dim premonition that unless I watched out I too would become afflicted with reader's fidgets made me carry through with entire success my three months' literary fast.

Some years ago I helped to manage a bookstore featuring a circulating library. The main body of customers consisted of commuters. Every evening, a few minutes after five, the commuters would dash in.

"Give me a novel!"

"Any special title?"

"No, any novel will do: it's for my wife"—as if that somehow made everything clear.

These commuters' wives—there are tens of thousands of them—were not really in any active sense doing any reading at all. They were taking their daily novel in a numbed or somnambulistic state. They were using books not for purposes of entertainment, but as an anodyne, a time-killer, a life-killer. Many "great readers" are of this class. Truth to tell, they have never read a book in their lives.

Akin to these novel addicts are the newspaper fiends who read three, four, or five papers a day and supplement them with radio news reports.

There is only one Keeley cure I can recommend for this weakness, and that is for these people to have their papers for a week, and go back and read the news of seven days before. They will then see, even in the short perspective thus provided, how contradictory, foolish, ineptly stated most "spot news" is. They will perceive that, if taken in overfrequent doses, its main effect is to bewilder or even to frighten, rather than to inform. A ration of one newspaper a day ought to be enough for anyone who still prefers to retain a little mental balance.

Serious reading is an art. An art is something you have to learn. To learn an art requires a teacher. There are too few such teachers of reading in the United States, and that is one of the reasons why we are still only a semi-educated people. I, like my fellow Americans, was never taught, in elementary and high school, how to read properly. Thus, when I reached college, I was but ill-equipped to understand any really original book that was handed to me, though I found no particular difficulty in getting through the required textbooks, manuals, and other predigested matter. I do not think I would ever have learned how to read had it not been for one man and one college course.

The man was John Erskine and the course was, rather absurdly, called Honors. Erskine himself was largely responsible for the conception underlying Honors, which in turn was the only begetter of Robert Hutchins' Chicago Plan, of the St. John's College classics curriculum, and in fact of the whole return in modern education to the great tradition of Western thought. John Erskine is a man of such varied talents that his original contribution to American education is often forgotten.

It is very hard to explain why Erskine was a great teacher. He was not a character as Copeland of Harvard was. Although always genial and fair, he never attempted to make the students like him. He did not act as if he were a perennial contestant in a popularity contest. (I am convinced, by the way, that those teachers who year after year are voted Most Popular by the undergraduates are rarely educators of great value.) In his literature courses Erskine never swooned over beauty or tried to make you "feel" the lines or the paragraph.

There were two things about Erskine that may help to explain the influence he wielded over his students, even over those who didn't care greatly about literature. One was his enormous respect (not merely liking) for his subject matter. This may seem a commonplace, but it is not. Many teachers—no more surprisingly than other frustrated human beings—have a silent, gnawing contempt for what they teach. Unaware of this contempt, they often find it subtly translated into a resentment of their students. The result is vitiated teaching, teaching of a purely formal sort.

Erskine not only loved his subject but revered it and respected himself for teaching it. There was thus a good moral relationship between himself and his work. It may seem high-flown to say that this moral relationship was a vital aid in the production of good teaching. Yet I'm sure this was the case.

He could teach his students to read because he had a large and lofty attitude toward what we were reading.

At the same time, if Erskine had been able to communicate only this attitude, he would not have been the great teacher he was. He went beyond this. To put it simply, he challenged us to understand what we were reading. He called upon us for a kind of mental exercise that is ordinarily devoted to mastering such "hard" subjects as philosophy and the sciences. (Actually, there are no "hard" or "easy" subjects. Donne is as difficult and as rewarding as Euclid.) Erskine made us work, and the odd thing about it was that the more we understood, the more we liked the particular book we were reading.

The Honors Course was but a systematic extension of the Erskine educational program. For two years, under the guidance of a group of selected instructors, we read and talked about one great book a week, beginning with Homer and concluding, as I recollect, with William James. That was all there was to the course, and it was by far the most valuable one I took at college.

## PREFACE TO "THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS"

*Joseph Conrad* (1897)

A WORK that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colours, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in the facts of life what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and convincing quality—the very truth of their existence. The artist, then, like the thinker or the scientist, seeks the truth and makes his appeal. Impressed by the aspect of the world, the thinker plunges into ideas, the scientist into facts—whence, presently emerging, they make their appeal to those qualities of our being that fit us best for the hazardous enterprise of living. They speak authoritatively to our common sense, to our intelligence, to our desire of peace or to our desire of unrest; not seldom to our prejudices, sometimes to our fears, often to our egoism—but always to our credulity. And their words are heard with reverence, for their concern is with weighty matters: with the cultivation of our minds and the proper care of our bodies, with the attainment of our ambitions, with the perfection of the means and the glorification of our precious aims.

It is otherwise with the artist.

Confronted by the same enigmatical spectacle the artist descends within himself; and in that lonely region of stress and strife, if he be deserving and fortunate, he finds the terms of his appeal. His appeal is made to our less

obvious capacities: to that part of our nature which, because of the warlike conditions of existence, is necessarily kept out of sight within the more resisting and hard qualities—like the vulnerable body within a steel armour. His appeal is less loud, more profound, less distinct, more stirring—and sooner forgotten. Yet its effect endures forever. The changing wisdom of successive generations discards ideas, questions facts, demolishes theories. But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom; to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.

It is only some such train of thought, or rather of feeling, that can in a measure explain the aim of the attempt, made in the tale which follows, to present an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple and the voiceless. For, if any part of truth dwells in the belief confessed above, it becomes evident that there is not a place of splendour or a dark corner of the earth that does not deserve, if only a passing glance of wonder and pity. The motive, then, may be held to justify the matter of the work; but this preface, which is simply an avowal of endeavour, cannot end here—for the avowal is not yet complete.

Fiction—if it at all aspires to be art—appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all the other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. Such an appeal to be effective must be an impression conveyed through the senses; and, in fact, it cannot be made in any other way, because temperament, whether individual or collective, is not amenable to persuasion. All art, therefore, appeals primarily to the senses, and the artistic aim when expressing itself in written words must also make its appeal through the senses, if its high desire is to reach the secret spring of responsive emotions. It must strenuously aspire to the plasticity of sculpture, to the colour of painting, and to the magic suggestiveness of music—which is the art of arts. And it is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance; it is only through an unremitting never-discouraged care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to colour, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the commonplace surface of words: of the old, old words, worn thin, defaced by ages of careless usage.

The sincere endeavour to accomplish that creative task, to go as far on that road as his strength will carry him, to go undeterred by faltering, weariness or reproach, is the only valid justification for the worker in prose. And if his conscience is clear, his answer to those who, in the fulness of a wisdom which looks for immediate profit, demand specifically to be edified, consoled, amused; who demand to be promptly improved, or encouraged, or frightened, or shocked, or charmed, must run thus: My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm—all you demand—and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.

To snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task. The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth—disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment. In a single-minded attempt of that kind, if one be deserving and fortunate, one may perchance attain to such clearness of sincerity that at last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or birth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; of the solidarity in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world.

It is evident that he who, rightly or wrongly, holds by the convictions expressed above cannot be faithful to any one of the temporary formulas of his craft. The enduring part of them—the truth which each only imperfectly veils—should abide with him as the most precious of his possessions, but they all: Realism, Romanticism, Naturalism, even the unofficial sentimentalism (which, like the poor, is exceedingly difficult to get rid of), all these gods must, after a short period of fellowship, abandon him—even on the very threshold of the temple—to the stammerings of his conscience and to the outspoken consciousness of the difficulties of his work. In that uneasy solitude the supreme cry of Art for Art itself loses the exciting ring of its apparent immorality. It sounds far off. It has ceased to be a cry, and is heard only as a whisper, often incomprehensible, but at times and faintly encouraging.

Sometimes, stretched at ease in the shade of a roadside tree, we watch the motions of a labourer in a distant field, and after a time begin to wonder languidly as to what the fellow may be at. We watch the movements of his body, the waving of his arms; we see him bend down, stand up, hesitate, begin again. It may add to the charm of an idle hour to be told the purpose of his exertions. If we know he is trying to lift a stone, to dig a ditch, to uproot a stump, we look with a more real interest at his efforts; we are disposed to

condone the jar of his agitation upon the restfulness of the landscape; and even, if in a brotherly frame of mind, we may bring ourselves to forgive his failure. We understood his object, and, after all, the fellow has tried, and perhaps he had not the strength—and perhaps he had not the knowledge. We forgive, go on our way—and forget.

And so it is with the workman of art. Art is long and life is short, and success is very far off. And thus, doubtful of strength to travel so far, we talk a little about the aim—the aim of art, which, like life itself, is inspiring, difficult—obscured by mists. It is not in the clear logic of a triumphant conclusion; it is not in the unveiling of one of those heartless secrets which are called the Laws of Nature. It is not less great, but only more difficult.

To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving and the fortunate, even that task is accomplished. And when it is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest.

## THE STORY OF A NOVEL

*Thomas Wolfe (1935)*

I DON'T know when it occurred to me first that I would be a writer. I suppose that, like a great many other children in this country of my generation, I may have thought that it would be a fine thing because a writer was a man like Lord Byron or Lord Tennyson or Longfellow or Percy Bysshe Shelley. A writer was a man who was far away like these people I have mentioned, and since I was myself an American and an American not of the wealthy or university-going sort of people, it seemed to me that a writer was a man from a kind of remote people that I could never approach. . . .

I don't know how I became a writer, but I think it was because of a certain force in me that had to write and that finally burst through and found a channel. My people were of the working class of people. My father, a stonecutter, was a man with a great respect and veneration for literature. He had a tremendous memory, and he loved poetry, and the poetry that he loved best was naturally of the rhetorical kind that such a man would like. Nevertheless it was good poetry: Hamlet's Soliloquy, "Macbeth," Mark Antony's Funeral Oration, Grey's "Elegy," and all the rest of it. I heard it all as a child; I memorized and learned it all.

He sent me to college to the state university. The desire to write, which had been strong during all my days in high school, grew stronger still. I was

editor of the college paper, the college magazine, etc., and in my last year or two I was a member of a course in playwriting which had just been established there. I wrote several little one-act plays, still thinking I would become a lawyer or a newspaper man, never daring to believe I could seriously become a writer. Then I went to Harvard, wrote some more plays there, became obsessed with the idea that I had to be a playwright, left Harvard, had my plays rejected, and finally in the autumn of 1926, how, why, or in what manner I have never exactly been able to determine, I began to write my first book in London. I was living all alone at that time. I had two rooms—a bedroom and a sitting room—in a little square in Chelsea in which all the houses had that familiar smoked-brick and cream-yellow-plaster look of London houses. They looked exactly alike.

As I say, I was living alone at that time and in a foreign country. I did not know why I was there or what the direction of my life should be, and that was the way I began to write my book. I think that is one of the hardest times a writer goes through. There is no standard, no outward judgment, by which he can measure what he has done. By day I would write for hours in big ledgers which I had bought for the purpose; then at night I would lie in bed and fold my hands behind my head and think of what I had done that day and hear the solid, leather footbeat of the London bobby as he came by my window, and remember that I was born in North Carolina and wonder why the hell I was now in London lying in the darkened bed, and thinking about words I had that day put down on paper. I would get a great, hollow, utterly futile feeling inside me, and then I would get up and switch on the light and read the words I had written that day, and then I would wonder: "Why am I here now? why have I come? . . ."

I worked there every day with such feelings as I have described, and came back to America in the winter and worked here. I would teach all day and write all night, and finally about two and a half years after I had begun the book in London, I finished it in New York.

I should like to tell about this, too. I was very young at the time, and I had the kind of wild, exultant vigor which a man has at that period of his life. The book took hold of me and possessed me. In a way, I think it shaped itself. Like every young man, I was strongly under the influence of writers I admired. One of the chief writers at that time was Mr. James Joyce with his book *Ulysses*. The book that I was writing was much influenced, I believe, by his own book, and yet the powerful energy and fire of my own youth played over and, I think, possessed it all. Like Mr. Joyce, I wrote about things that I had known, the immediate life and experience that had been familiar to me in my childhood. Unlike Mr. Joyce, I had no literary experience. I had never had anything published before. My feeling toward writers, publishers, books, that whole fabulous faraway world, was almost as romantically unreal as when I was a child. And yet my book, the characters with which I had peopled it, the color and the weather of the universe which

I had created, had possessed me, and so I wrote and wrote with that bright flame with which a young man writes who never has been published, and who yet is sure all will be good and must go well. This is a curious thing and hard to tell about, yet easy to understand in every writer's mind. I wanted fame, as every youth who ever wrote must want it, and yet fame was a shining, bright, and most uncertain thing.

The book was finished in my twenty-eighth year. I knew no publishers and no writers. A friend of mine took the huge manuscript—it was about 350,000 words long—and sent it to a publisher whom she knew. In a few days, a week or two, I received an answer from this man saying that the book could not be published. The gist of what he said was that his house had published several books like it the year before, that all of them had failed, and that, further, the book in its present form was so amateurish, autobiographical, and unskilful that a publisher could not risk a chance on it. I was, myself, so depressed and weary by this time, the illusion of creation which had sustained me for two and a half years had so far worn off, that I believed what the man said. At that time I was a teacher in one of New York's great universities, and when the year came to a close, I went abroad. It was only after I had been abroad almost six months that news came to me from another publisher in America that he had read my manuscript and would like to talk to me about it as soon as I came home.

I came home on New Year's Day that year. The next day I called up the publisher who had written me. He asked me if I would come to his office and talk to him. I went at once, and before I had left his office that morning, I had signed a contract and had a check for five hundred dollars in my hand.

It was the first time, so far as I can remember, that anyone had concretely suggested to me that anything I had written was worth as much as fifteen cents, and I know that I left the publisher's office that day and entered into the great swarm of men and women who passed constantly along Fifth Avenue at Forty-eighth Street and that presently I found myself at One Hundred and Tenth Street, and from that day to this I have never known how I got there.

For the next six or eight months I taught at the university and worked upon the manuscript of my book with this great editor. The book appeared in the month of October, 1929. The whole experience still had elements of that dream-like terror and unreality that writing had had for me when I had first begun it seriously and had lain in my room in London with my hands below my head and thought, "Why am I here now?" The awful, utter nakedness of print, that thing which is for all of us so namelessly akin to shame, came closer day by day. That I had wanted this exposure, I could not believe. It seemed to me that I had shamelessly exposed myself and yet that subtle drug of my desire and my creating held me with a serpent's eye, and I could do no other. I turned at last to this editor who had worked with me and found me, and I asked him if he could foretell the end and verdict



of my labor. He said that he would rather tell me nothing, that he could not prophesy or know what profit I would have. He said, "All that I know is that they cannot let it go, they cannot ignore it. The book will find its way." . . .

I had written my book, more or less, directly from the experience of my own life, and, furthermore, I now think that I may have written it with a certain naked intensity of spirit which is likely to characterize the earliest work of a young writer. At any rate, I can honestly say that I did not foresee what was to happen. I was surprised not only by the kind of response my book had with the critics and the general public, I was most of all surprised with the response it had in my native town. I had thought there might be a hundred people in that town who would read the book, but if there were a hundred, outside the Negro population, the blind, and the positively illiterate who did not read it, I do not know where they are. For months the town seethed with a fury of resentment which I had not believed possible. The book was denounced from the pulpit by the ministers of the leading churches. Men collected on street corners to denounce it. For weeks the women's clubs, bridge parties, teas, receptions, book clubs, the whole complex fabric of a small town's social life was absorbed by an outraged clamor. I received anonymous letters full of vilification and abuse, one which threatened to kill me if I came back home, others which were merely obscene. One venerable old lady, whom I had known all my life, wrote me that although she had never believed in the lynch law, she would do nothing to prevent a mob from dragging my "big overgrown karkus" across the public square. She informed me, further, that my mother had taken to her bed "as white as a ghost" and would "never rise from it again."

There were many other venomous attacks from my home town, and for the first time I learned another lesson which every young writer has got to learn. And that lesson is the naked, blazing power of print. At that time it was for me a bewildering and almost overwhelming situation. My joy at the success my book had won mixed with bitter chagrin at its reception in my native town. And yet I think I learned something from that experience, too. For the first time I was forced to consider squarely this problem: where does the material of an artist come from? What are the proper uses of that material, and how far must his freedom in the use of that material be controlled by his responsibility as a member of society? This is a difficult problem, and I have by no means come to the bottom of it yet. Perhaps I never will, but as a result of all the distress which I suffered at that time and which others may have suffered on account of me, I have done much thinking and arrived at certain conclusions.

My book was what is often referred to as an autobiographical novel. I protested against this term in a preface to the book upon the grounds that any serious work of creation is of necessity autobiographical and that few more autobiographical works than *Gulliver's Travels* have ever been writ-

ten. I added that Dr. Johnson had remarked that a man might turn over half the volumes in his library to make a single book, and that in a similar way a novelist might turn over half the characters in his native town to make a single figure for his novel. In spite of this the people in my native town were not persuaded or appeased, and the charge of autobiography was brought against me in many other places.

As I have said, my conviction is that all serious creative work must be at bottom autobiographical, and that a man must use the material and experience of his own life if he is to create anything that has substantial value. But I also believe now that the young writer is often led through inexperience to a use of the materials of life which are, perhaps, somewhat too naked and direct for the purpose of a work of art. The thing a young writer is likely to do is to confuse the limits between actuality and reality. He tends unconsciously to describe an event in such a way because it actually happened that way, and from an artistic point of view, I can now see that this is wrong. It is not, for example, important that one remembers a beautiful woman of easy virtue as having come from the State of Kentucky in the year 1907. She could perfectly well have come from Idaho or Texas or Nova Scotia. The important thing really is only to express as well as possible the character and quality of the beautiful woman of easy virtue. But the young writer, chained to fact and to his own inexperience, as yet unliberated by maturity, is likely to argue, "She must be described as coming from Kentucky because that is where she actually did come from."

In spite of this, it is impossible for a man who has the stuff of creation in him to make a literal transcription of his own experience. Everything in a work of art is changed and transfigured by the personality of the artist. And as far as my own first book is concerned, I can truthfully say that I do not believe that there is a single page of it that is true to fact. And from this circumstance, also, I learned another curious thing about writing. For although my book was not true to fact, it was true to the general experience of the town I came from and I hope, of course, to the general experience of all men living. The best way I can describe the situation is this: it was as if I were a sculptor who had found a certain kind of clay with which to model. Now, a farmer who knew well the neighborhood from which this clay had come might pass by and find the sculptor at his work and say to him, "I know the farm from which you got that clay." But it would be unfair of him to say, "I know the figure, too." Now, I think what happened in my native town is that, having seen the clay, they became immediately convinced that they recognized the figure, too, and the results of this misconception were so painful and ludicrous that the telling of it is almost past belief.

It was my experience to be assured by people from my native town not only that they remembered incidents and characters in my first book, which may have had some basis in actuality, but also that they remembered incidents which so far as I know had no historical basis whatever. For example,

there was one scene in the book in which a stonecutter is represented as selling to a notorious woman of the town a statue of a marble angel which he has treasured for many years. So far as I know, there was no basis in fact for this story, and yet I was informed by several people later that they not only remembered the incident perfectly, but had actually been witnesses to the transaction. Nor was this the end of the story. I heard that one of the newspapers sent a reporter and a photographer to the cemetery and a photograph was printed in the paper with a statement to the effect that the angel was the now famous angel which had stood upon the stonecutter's porch for so many years and had given the title to my book. The unfortunate part of this proceeding was that I had never seen or heard of this angel before, and that this angel was, in fact, erected over the grave of a well-known Methodist lady who had died a few years before and that her indignant family had immediately written the paper to demand a retraction of its story, saying that their mother had been in no way connected with the infamous book or the infamous angel which had given the infamous book its name. Such, then, were some of the unforeseen difficulties with which I was confronted after the publication of my first book.

Month was passing into month; I had had a success. The way was opened to me. There was only one thing for me to do and that was work, and I was spending my time consuming myself with anger, grief, and useless passion about the reception the book had had in my native town, or wasting myself again in exuberant elation because of the critics and the readers' praise, or in anguish and bitterness because of their ridicule. For the first time, I realized the nature of one of the artist's greatest conflicts, and was faced with the need of meeting it. For the first time I saw not only that the artist must live and sweat and love and suffer and enjoy as other men, but that the artist must also work as other men and that, furthermore, he must work even while these common events of life are going on. It seems a simple and banal assertion, but I learned it hardly, and in one of the worst moments of my life. There is no such thing as an artistic vacuum; there is no such thing as a time when the artist may work in a delightful atmosphere, free of agony that other men must know, or if the artist ever does find such a time, it is something not to be hoped for, something not to be sought for indefinitely.

At any rate, while my life and energy were absorbed in the emotional vortex which my first book had created, I was getting almost no work done on the second. And now I was faced with another fundamental problem which every young writer must meet squarely if he is to continue. How is a man to get his writing done? How long should he work at writing and how often? What kind of method, if any, must he find in following his work? I suddenly found myself face to face with the grim necessity of constant, daily work. And as simple as this discovery may seem to everyone, I was not prepared for it. A young writer without a public does not feel the sense of necessity, the pressure of time, as does a writer who has been pub-

lished and who must now begin to think of time schedules, publishing seasons, the completion of his next book. I realized suddenly with a sense of definite shock that I had let six months go by since the publication of my first book and that, save for a great many notes and fragments, I had done nothing. Meanwhile, the book continued to sell slowly but steadily, and in February, 1930, about five months after its publication, I found it possible to resign from the faculty of New York University and devote my full time to the preparation of a second book. That spring I was also fortunate enough to be awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, which would enable me to live and work abroad for a year. And accordingly, at the beginning of May, I went abroad again.

I was in Paris for a couple of months, until the middle of July, and although I now compelled myself to work for four or five hours a day, my effort at composition was still confused and broken, and there was nothing yet that had the structural form and unity of a book. The life of the great city fascinated me as it had always done, but also aroused all the old feelings of naked homelessness, rootlessness, and loneliness which I have always felt there. . . .

During that summer in Paris, I think I felt this great homesickness more than ever before, and I really believe that from this emotion, this constant and almost intolerable effort of memory and desire, the material and the structure of the books I now began to write were derived.

The quality of my memory is characterized, I believe, in a more than ordinary degree by the intensity of its sense impressions, its power to evoke and bring back the odors, sounds, colors, shapes, and feel of things with concrete vividness. Now my memory was at work night and day, in a way that I could at first neither check nor control and that swarmed unbidden in a stream of blazing pageantry across my mind, with the million forms and substances of the life that I had left, which was my own, America. I would be sitting, for example, on the terrace of a café watching the flash and play of life before me on the Avenue de l'Opéra and suddenly I would remember the iron railing that goes along the boardwalk at Atlantic City. I could see it instantly just the way it was—the heavy iron pipe; its raw, galvanized look; the way the joints were fitted together. It was all so vivid and concrete that I could feel my hand upon it and know the exact dimensions, its size and weight and shape. And suddenly I would realize that I had never seen any railing that looked like this in Europe. And this utterly familiar, common thing would suddenly be revealed to me with all the wonder with which we discover a thing which we have seen all our life and yet have never known before. Or again, it would be a bridge, the look of an old iron bridge across an American river, the sound the train makes as it goes across it; the spoke-and-hollow rumble of the ties below; the look of the muddy banks; the slow, thick, yellow wash of an American river; an old flat-bottomed boat, half filled with water, stogged in the muddy bank. . . . Or again, it would be

an American street with all its jumble of a thousand ugly architectures. It would be Montague Street or Fulton Street in Brooklyn, or Eleventh Street in New York, or other streets where I had lived; and suddenly I would see the gaunt and savage webbing of the elevated structure along Fulton Street, and how the light swarmed through in dusty, broken bars, and I could remember the old, familiar rusty color, that incomparable rusty color that gets into so many things here in America. And this also would be like something I had seen a million times and lived with all my life.

I would sit there, looking out upon the Avenue de l'Opéra and my life would ache with the whole memory of it; the desire to see it again; somehow to find a word for it; a language that would tell its shape, its color, the way we have all known and felt and seen it. And when I understood this thing, I saw that I must find for myself the tongue to utter what I knew but could not say. And from the moment of that discovery, the line and purpose of my life was shaped. The end toward which every energy of my life and talent would be henceforth directed was in such a way as this defined. It was as if I had discovered a whole new universe of chemical elements and had begun to see certain relations between some of them but had by no means begun to organize the whole series into a harmonious and coherent union. From this time on, I think my efforts might be described as the effort to complete that organization, to discover that articulation for which I strove, to bring about that final coherent union. I know that I have failed thus far in doing so, but I believe I understand pretty thoroughly just where the nature of my failure lies, and, of course, my deepest and most earnest hope is that the time will come when I will not fail.

At any rate, from this time on, the general progress of the three books which I was to write in the next four and a half years could be fairly described in somewhat this way. It was a progress that began in a whirling vortex and a creative chaos and that proceeded slowly at the expense of infinite confusion, toil, and error toward clarification and the articulation of an ordered and formal structure. An extraordinary image remains to me from that year, the year I spent abroad when the material of these books first began to take on an articulate form. It seemed that I had inside me, swelling and gathering all the time, a huge black cloud, and that this cloud was loaded with electricity, pregnant, crested, with a kind of hurricane violence that could not be held in check much longer; that the moment was approaching fast when it must break. Well, all I can say is that the storm did break. It broke that summer while I was in Switzerland. It came in torrents, and it is not over yet.

I cannot really say the book was written. It was something that took hold of me and possessed me, and before I was done with it—that is, before I finally emerged with the first completed part—it seemed to me that it had done for me. It was exactly as if this great black storm cloud I have spoken of had opened up and, mid flashes of lightning, was pouring from its depth

a torrential and ungovernable flood. Upon that flood everything was swept and borne along as by a great river. And I was borne along with it.

There was nothing at first which could be called a novel. I wrote about night and darkness in America, and the faces of the sleepers in ten thousand little towns; and of the tides of sleep and how the rivers flowed forever in the darkness. I wrote about the hissing glut of tides upon ten thousand miles of coast; of how the moonlight blazed down on the wilderness and filled the cat's cold eye with blazing yellow. I wrote about death and sleep, and of that enfebled rock of life we call the city. I wrote about October, of great trains that thundered through the night, of ships and stations in the morning; of men in harbors and the traffic of the ships.

I spent the winter of that year in England from October until March, and here, perhaps because of the homely familiarity of the English life, the sense of order and repose which such a life can give one, my work moved forward still another step from this flood tide of chaos of creation. For the first time the work began to take on the lineaments of design. These lineaments were still confused and broken, sometimes utterly lost, but now I really did get the sense at last that I was working on a great block of marble, shaping a figure which no one but its maker could as yet define, but which was emerging more and more into the sinewy lines of composition.

From the beginning—and this was one fact that in all my times of hopelessness returned to fortify my faith in my conviction—the idea, the central legend that I wished my book to express had not changed. And this central idea was this: the deepest search in life, it seemed to me, the thing that in one way or another was central to all living was man's search to find a father, not merely the father of his youth, but the image of a strength and wisdom external to his need and superior to his hunger, to which the belief and power of his own life could be united.

Yet I was terribly far away from the actual accomplishment of a book—how far away I could not at that time foresee. But four more years would have to pass before the first of the series of books on which I was now embarked would be ready for the press, and if I could have known that in those next four years there would be packed a hundred lives of birth and death, despair, defeat, and triumph and the sheer exhaustion of a brute fatigue, I do not know whether or not I could have found the power within myself to continue. But I was still sustained by the exuberant optimism of youth. My temperament, which is pessimistic about many things, has always been a curiously sanguine one concerning time, and although more than a year had now gone by and I had done no more than write great chants on death and sleep, prepare countless notes and trace here and there the first dim outlines of a formal pattern, I was confident that by the spring or the fall of the next year my book would somehow miraculously be ready.

So far as I can describe with any accuracy, the progress of that winter's work in England was not along the lines of planned design, but along this line

that I have mentioned—writing some of the sections which I knew would have to be in the book. Meanwhile what was really going on in my whole creative consciousness, during all this time, although I did not realize it at the moment, was this: What I was really doing, what I had been doing all the time since my discovery of my America in Paris the summer before, was to explore day by day and month by month with a fanatic intensity, the whole material domain of my resources as a man and as a writer. This exploration went on for a period which I can estimate conservatively as two years and a half. It is still going on, although not with the same all-absorbing and fanatical intensity, because the work it led to, the work that after infinite waste and labor it helped me wonderfully to define, that work has reached such a state of final definition that the immediate task of finishing it is the one that now occupies the energy and interest of my life.

In a way, during that period of my life, I think I was like the Ancient Mariner who told the Wedding Guest that his frame was wrenched by the woeful agony which forced him to begin his tale before it left him free. In my own experience, my wedding guests were the great ledgers in which I wrote, and the tale which I told to them would have seemed, I am afraid, completely incoherent, as meaningless as Chinese characters, had any reader seen them. I could by no means hope to give a comprehensive idea of its whole extent because three years of work and perhaps a million and a half words went into these books. It included everything from gigantic and staggering lists of the towns, cities, counties, states, and countries I had been in, to minutely thorough, desperately evocative descriptions of the undercarriage, the springs, wheels, flanges, axle rods, color, weight, and quality of the day coach of an American railway train. There were lists of the rooms and houses in which I had lived or in which I had slept for at least a night, together with the most accurate and evocative descriptions of those rooms that I could write—their size, their shape, the color and design of the wallpaper, the way a towel hung down, the way a chair creaked, a streak of water rust upon the ceiling. There were countless charts, catalogues, descriptions that I can only classify here under the general heading of Amount and Number. What were the total combined populations of all the countries in Europe and America? In how many of those countries had I had some personal and vital experience? In the course of my twenty-nine or thirty years of living, how many people had I seen? How many had I passed by on the streets? How many had I seen on trains and subways, in theatres, at baseball or football games? With how many had I actually had some vital and illuminating experience, whether of joy, pain, anger, pity, love, or simple casual companionship, however brief?

In addition, one might come upon other sections under some such cryptic heading as "Where Now?" Under such a heading as this, there would be brief notations of those thousands of things which all of us have seen for just a flash, a moment in our lives, which seem to be of no consequence whatever

at the moment that we see them, and which live in our minds and hearts forever, which are somehow pregnant with all the joy and sorrow of the human destiny, and which we know, somehow, are therefore more important than many things of more apparent consequence. "Where now?" Some quiet steps that came and passed along a leafy night-time street in summer in a little town down South long years ago; a woman's voice, her sudden burst of low and tender laughter; then the voices and the footsteps going, silence, the leafy rustle of the trees. "Where now?" Two trains that met and paused at a little station at some little town at some unknown moment upon the huge body of the continent; a girl who looked and smiled from the window of the other train; another passing in a motor car on the streets of Norfolk; the winter boarders in a little boarding house down South twenty years ago; Miss Florrie Mangle, the trained nurse; Miss Jessie Rimmer, the cashier at Reed's drug store; Dr. Richards, the clairvoyant; the pretty girl who cracked the whip and thrust her head into the lion's mouth with Johnny J. Jones Carnival and Combined Shows.

"Where now?" It went beyond the limits of man's actual memory. It went back to the farthest adytum of his childhood before conscious memory had begun, the way he thought he must have felt the sun one day and heard Peagram's cow next door wrenching the coarse grass against the fence, or heard the street car stop upon the hill above his father's house at noon; and Earnest Peagram coming home to lunch, his hearty voice in midday greeting; and then the street car going, the sudden lonely green-gold silence of the street car's absence and an iron gate slamming, then the light of that lost day fades out. "Where now?" He can recall no more and does not know if what he has recalled is fact or fable or a fusion of the two. Where now—in these great ledger books, month after month, I wrote such things as this. Not only the concrete, material record of man's ordered memory, but all the things he scarcely dares to think he has remembered; all the flicks and darts and haunting lights that flash across the mind of man that will return unbidden at an unexpected moment: a voice once heard; a face that vanished; the way the sunlight came and went; the rustling of a leaf upon a bough; a stone, a leaf, a door.

It may be objected—it has been objected already by certain critics—that in such research as I have here attempted to describe there is a quality of intemperate excess, an almost insane hunger to devour the entire body of human experience, to attempt to include more, experience more, than the measure of one life can hold, or than the limits of a single work of art can well define. I readily admit the validity of this criticism. I think I realize as well as anyone the fatal dangers that are consequent to such a ravenous desire, the damage it may wreak; having had this thing within me, it was in no way possible for me to reason it out of me, no matter how cogently my reason worked against it. The only way I could meet it was to meet it squarely, not with reason, but with life.



It was part of my life; for many years it was my life; and the only way I could get it out of me was to live it out of me. And that is what I did. I have not wholly succeeded in that purpose yet, but I have succeeded better than I at one time dared to hope. And now I really believe that, so far as the artist is concerned, the unlimited extent of human experience is not so important for him as the depth and intensity with which he experiences things. I also know now that it is a great deal more important to have known one hundred living men and women in New York, to have understood their lives, to have got, somehow, at the root and source from which their natures came, than to have seen or passed or talked with 7,000,000 people upon the city streets. And what finally I should most like to say about this research which I have attempted to describe is this: That, foolish and mistaken as much of it may seem, the total quality, end, and impact of that whole experience was not useless or excessive. And from my own point of view, at least, it is in its whole implication the one thing I may have to tell about my experience as a writer which may be of some concrete value to other people. I consider this experience on the whole the most valuable and practical in my whole life thus far as a writer. With all the waste and error and confusion it led me into, it brought me closer to a concrete definition of my resources, a true estimate of my talents at this period of my life, and, most of all, toward a rudimentary, a just-beginning, but a living apprehension of the articulation I am looking for, the language I have got to have if, as an artist, my life is to proceed and grow, than any other thing that has ever happened to me.

I know the door is not yet open. I know the tongue, the speech, the language that I seek is not yet found; but I believe with all my heart that I have found the way, have made a channel, am started on my first beginning. And I believe with all my heart, also, that each man who ever hopes to make a living thing out of the substances of his own life must find that way, that language, and that door—must find it for himself as I have tried to do.

## A NOVELIST BEGINS

James T. Farrell (1938)

### I

I BEGAN writing what has developed into the trilogy, *Studs Lonigan*, in June 1929. *Judgment Day* was finally completed at the end of January 1935. In June 1929, I was a young man who had burned other bridges behind me with the determination to write whether my efforts brought success or failure. I was then finishing what happened to be the last quarter in which I was a student at the University of Chicago.

Three times before, I had dropped out of classes because I was restless and

dissatisfied. I resolved to devote my time to writing and to educating myself in my own haphazard manner. For a fourth and last time I had matriculated and I managed to finish out the quarter. Although I read continuously and rather broadly, I could not, after my sophomore year, maintain a steady interest in any of my courses except composition, where I could write as much as I pleased. I would cut other classes, day after day, finally dropping out, heedless of the loss of credit and the waste of money I had spent in tuition.

My mood or state of mind in those days was, I believe, one which most young writers will recognize. To be a young man with literary aspirations is not to be particularly happy. At first, the desire to write is more strong than is a clear perception of what one wants to write and how one will write it. There are surprising oscillations of mood. One moment the young writer is energetic and hopeful. The next, he is catapulted into a fit of despair with his faith in himself infirm, his self-confidence shattered and broken, his view of the future one in which he sees futile self-sacrifices ending only in dismal failure. There are times when he cannot look his friends in the eye. There are moments when he feels himself to be set against the opposition of the entire world. There are occasions when he turns a caustic wit, a brutal sarcasm, and a savage arrogance on others only because he is defending himself from himself.

Suddenly he will be devastated by an image of himself in which he sees a nobody who has had the temerity and egotism to want to call himself a writer. He measures himself, with his few unpublished manuscripts, against the accomplishments of great writers, and his ambition suddenly seems like insanity. Even though he is not particularly conscious of clothes, there are periods when he gazes upon his own shabbiness—his unshined shoes, his worn and unpressed suit, his frayed overcoat, his uncut hair—and sees this all as a badge of his own miserable mediocrity. A sense of failure dogs his steps. Living with himself becomes almost unendurable.

Writing is one of the cruellest of professions. The sense of possible failure in a literary career can torment one pitilessly. And failure in a literary career cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Poverty and the struggle for bread are not the only features of a literary career which can make it so cruel. There is the self-imposed loneliness. There is the endless struggle to perceive freshly and clearly, to realize and re-create a sense of life on paper. There is more than economic competition involved. The writer feels frequently that he is competing with time and with life itself. His hopes will sometimes ride high. His ambitions will soar until they have become so grandiose that they cannot be realized within the space of a single lifetime.

The world opens up before the young writer as a grand and glorious adventure in feeling and in understanding. Nothing human is unimportant to him. Everything that he sees is germane to his purpose. Every word that he hears uttered is of potential use to him. Every mood, every passing fancy,

every trivial thought, can have its meaning and its place in the store of experience which he accumulates. The opportunities for assimilation are enormous, endless. And there is only one single short life of struggle in which to assimilate.

A melancholy sense of time becomes a torment. One's whole spirit rebels against a truism which all men must realize because it applies to all men. One seethes in rebellion against the realization that the human being must accept limitations, that he can develop in one line of effort only at the cost of making many sacrifices in other lines. Time becomes for the writer the most precious good in all the world. And how often will he not feel that he is squandering this precious good? His life then seems like a sieve through which his days are filtering, leaving behind only a few, a very few, miserable grains of experience. If he is wasting time to-day, what assurance can he give himself that he will not be doing likewise to-morrow? He is struggling with himself to attain self-discipline. He weighs every failure in his struggle. He begins to find a sense of death—death before he has fulfilled any of his potentialities—like a dark shadow cast constantly close to his awareness.

Such were some of the components of my own state of mind when *Studs Lonigan* was begun.

## II

In the spring of 1929, I took a course in advanced composition conducted by Professor James Weber Linn. And Professor Linn—with whom I was constantly at loggerheads concerning literary questions—was encouraging. His encouragement, as well as my arguments with him and with the majority of the class, assisted me in maintaining my own self-confidence. For his course I wrote thousands of words. I wrote stories, sketches, book reviews, essays, impressions, anecdotes.

Most of these manuscripts related to death, disintegration, human indignity, poverty, drunkenness, ignorance, human cruelty. They attempted to describe dusty and deserted streets, street corners, miserable homes, pool-rooms, brothels, dance halls, taxi dances, bohemian sections, express offices, gasoline filling stations, scenes laid in slum districts. The characters were boys, boys' gangs, drunkards, Negroes, expressmen, homosexuals, immigrants and immigrant landlords, filling-station attendants, straw bosses, hitch-hikers, bums, bewildered parents. Most of the manuscripts were written with the ideal of objectivity in mind. I realized then that the writer should submit himself to an objective discipline. These early manuscripts of mine were written, in the main, out of such an intention.

One of the stories which I wrote for Professor Linn's course was titled "Studs." It was originally published in *This Quarter*. "Studs" is the story of a wake, written in the first person. The corpse is a lad from the Fifty-eighth Street neighborhood who died suddenly at the age of twenty-six. The story describes his background and his friends. They have come to the wake, and

they sit in the rear of the apartment discussing the mysteries of death in banalities, nostalgically remembering the good old days, contentedly describing dull details of their current life. The author of the story sits there, half-heartedly trying to join in the conversation, recollecting the past vividly, remembering how these fellows who are now corpulent and sunk in the trivialities of day-to-day living were once adventurous boys.

Professor Linn read this story in class and praised it most enthusiastically. I had no genuine opinion concerning it. I had tried to write it as honestly, as clearly, and as well as I could. I did not know what I thought of it. The praise which the story received in class greatly encouraged me. I asked Professor Robert Morss Lovett to read it. He kindly consented, and after doing so he called me to his office and suggested that the story should be developed at greater length, and the milieu described in it put down in greater detail. I had already begun to think of doing this, and Professor Lovett's advice clinched the matter for me.

In a sense, Professor Linn and Professor Lovett are the spiritual godfathers of *Studs Lonigan*.

When I began working on this material, I envisaged one long novel, ending in a scene similar to that described in the story, "Studs." I saw in the character of Studs Lonigan, who was growing in my mind, a number of tendencies at work in a section of American life which I happened to know because it had been part of my own education in living. I began to see Studs not only as a character in imaginative fiction but also as a social manifestation. In the early stages of writing this work, I analyzed my character as I considered him in his relations to his own world, his own milieu. I set as my aim that of unfolding the destiny of Studs Lonigan in his own words, his own actions, his own patterns of thought and feeling. I decided that my task was not to state formally what life meant to me, but to try to re-create a sense of what life meant to Studs Lonigan.

I worked on with this project, setting up as an ideal the strictest possible objectivity. As I wrote, the book enlarged and expanded. It grew into two novels, and finally into three. There were numberless changes and expansions of the original conception, alterations in emphasis, reconstructions of the structure of events, from the time that the project was first conceived until the last line was written. However, to go into this phase of the work would be dull, and it would sound too much like a pretentious effort to bring one's laboratory out in public. All works of imaginative fiction go through such a process of change and expansion.

### III

Studs Lonigan was conceived as a normal American boy of Irish Catholic extraction. The social milieu in which he lived and was educated was one of spiritual poverty. It was not, contrary to some misconceptions, a slum neighborhood. Had I written *Studs Lonigan* as a story of the slums, it would have

been easy for the reader falsely to place the motivation and causation of the story directly in immediate economic roots. Such a placing of motivation would have obscured one of the most important meanings which I wanted to infuse into my story—my desire to reveal the concrete effects of spiritual poverty.

It is readily known that poverty and slums cause spiritual poverty in many lives. One of the important meanings which I perceived in this story was that here was a neighborhood several steps removed from the slums and dire economic want, and here was manifested a pervasive spiritual poverty.

The fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers of boys like Studs Lonigan came to America as to a new world. They came from the shores of that island whose history is one of the most bitter of all time. Most of them were poor immigrants. Some of them could not read or write. They belonged at the bottom of the American social and economic ladder. Many of them did menial work, and the lives which they led were hard. They struggled upward in American society just as have other immigrant groups and races before and after them.

Their lives constituted a process in which they were assimilated into the American petty bourgeoisie and the American labor aristocracy. Their lives were dedicated to work, to advancing themselves, to saving and thrift, to raising their families. They rose socially and economically. Ultimately many of them owned buildings and conducted their own small business enterprises. They became politicians, straw bosses, salesmen, boss craftsmen, and the like. And they became tired.

Their spiritual resources were meagre. They believed in the American myths of success and advancement. They believed in the teachings and dogma of their faith. They believed that with homilies, platitudes about faith and work, and little fables about good example they could educate their children. They believed that thus their children would start off in the race of life with greater advantages than they had had, and that their children would advance so much the farther, so many more rungs on the economic and social ladder.

The story of Studs Lonigan opens on the day that Woodrow Wilson is renominated to run for a second term as President of the United States. It closes in the depths of the Hoover era.

It was during the period of the Wilsonian Administration that this nation reached upward toward the zenith of its power and became, perhaps, the richest and the most powerful nation in all history. The story of Studs Lonigan was conceived as the story of the education of a normal American boy in this period. The important institutions in the education of Studs Lonigan are the home and the family, the church, the school, and the playground. These institutions break down, and do not serve their desired function. The streets become a potent educative factor in the boy's life. In time, the poolroom becomes an important institution in his life. When Studs reaches his young-manhood, this nation is moving headlong into one of the most insane eras of our history—the Prohibition era.

A word here is necessary concerning the drinking of Studs and his companions. This drinking has a definite social character. When Studs and his companions drink, they do so as a gesture of defiance which is in the spirit of the times. Drinking in those days became a social ritual. Furthermore, when Studs and his companions began drinking, the worst liquor of the Prohibition era was being sold. Those were the days when the newspapers published daily death lists of the number of persons who had died from bootleg liquor and wood alcohol. That was the time when men and boys would take one or two drinks, pass out into unconsciousness, and come to their senses later to learn that they would never again have their eyesight.

All generations drink more or less in the period of young-manhood. But all generations do not drink the kind of bootleg liquor which Studs Lonigan and his companions drank. The health of Studs and many of his friends is impaired and permanently ruined in this story. That very loss of health has, it can be seen now, a social character.

Studs Lonigan is neither a tough nor a gangster. He is not really a hard guy. He is a normal young American of his time and his class. His values become the values of his world. He has as many good impulses as normal human beings have. In time, because of defeat, of frustration, of a total situation which is characterized by spiritual poverty, these good impulses go more and more into the stream of his reverie. Here we find the source of Studs's constant dream of himself.

His dream of himself changes in character as the story progresses. In the beginning, it is a vision of what he is going to be. He is a boy waiting at the threshold of life. His dream of himself is a romantic projection of his future, conceived in the terms and the values of his milieu. In time, this dream of himself turns backward. It is no longer a romantic projection of things to come. More and more it becomes a nostalgic image turned toward the past. Does this not happen in greater or lesser degree to all of us?

Shortly after I began working on *Studs Lonigan*, I happened to be reading John Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct*, and I came upon the following sentence which I used as a frontispiece quotation in *Young Lonigan*: "The poignancy of situations which evoke reflection lies in the fact that we do not know the meaning of the tendencies that are pressing for action." This observation crystallized for me what I was seeking to do. This work grew out of a situation which evoked reflection. The situation revealed to me the final meaning of tendencies which had been pressing for action. And that final situation became death, turning poignancy into tragedy.

*Studs Lonigan* was conceived as the story of an American destiny in our time. It deals with the making and the education of an American boy. My attitude toward it and toward my character here is essentially a simple one. "There, but for the grace of God, go I." . . . There, but for the grace of God, go many others.

Mark

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poet. Certainly there have been poets with very thick hides. We have to account for the fact that Browning looked more like a business man than he did like a poet—whatever a poet is supposed to look like; that Horace was plump, phlegmatic, easy-going, shrewd, and sensible; that Dryden was an excellent trader in literary affairs; that Pope was so insensitive, at least to the sufferings of others, that he poured an emetic into the tea of a publisher with whom he had quarreled; that Li Po and most of the other great Chinese poets were government officials; that Robert Frost is to all outward appearances—and what other appearances are there?—a New England farmer.

There is reason for supposing that no artist is as sensitive in one respect as the man who is not an artist. He is not so likely, that is, to be overwhelmed by his own feelings. Consider what he does with his feelings. He uses them, deliberately, for the purposes of his art. The ordinary man—meaning for the moment the man who is not an artist—may be so affected by the death of a parent, for instance, that he becomes dumb. There was Daudet, however, who at the funeral of his mother could not help composing the room where he stood into a room that would be the setting of a new story. He was using his feelings, together with the scene which called them forth, for an ulterior purpose. The artist is callous, and must be so in order to keep his mind clear for the work he has before him. So also the poet must be sensitive to words, rhythms, ideas, and moods; but in the very act of perceiving them clearly, in realizing them for what they are worth, he distinguishes himself from the race of men who feel and only feel. When we read the poetry of a man like Pope, who was extraordinarily, almost abnormally, susceptible to the charms of verbal music, we can have no doubt that he was, in that one department of his existence, all sense. We are not justified, however, in going on, as a recent biographer of the little man has done, to attribute to him a sensitive heart. As a matter of fact he had another kind, and in the ordinary man it would be denounced as an ugly one.

From the notion that the poet is deeply affected by life we often proceed to the notion that he cannot stand a great deal of it; we say he dies young. To be sure, there are the English romantic poets—Shelley, Keats, and Byron—to support our error, and to be sure, they are always conspicuously present in spirit when poetry is under discussion, since it was their generation that gave us our conception of poetry and the poet; we still are in the romantic period. But even as we talk this way we seem to forget their contemporary Wordsworth, who lived in perfect peace till he was eighty. We forget that Dryden lived to seventy, Shakespeare to fifty-two, Browning to seventy-seven, Tennyson to eighty-three, Milton to sixty-six, Herrick to eighty-three, Spenser to almost fifty, and Chaucer to an even sixty. We disregard the great age of Homer when he died, at least if the traditions be true. And anyway the ancient traditions about poets have their significance. For one of them was that poets die old; hence the bust of Homer, wrinkled, composed, resigned, with sunken eyes. The three great tragic poets of Greece died old indeed;



Aeschylus at sixty-nine, Sophocles at ninety, and Euripides at seventy-five. Vergil and Horace gave up the struggle in their fifties, Lucretius committed suicide, it is said, at forty-three or forty-four, and Catullus, like Shelley, was extinguished at thirty; but Ovid, for all his banishment to a cold, uncomfortable part of the world, and his probable suffering there, lived into his sixtieth year; and Ennius, first of all the known Roman poets, saw seventy. Dante had a hard life, but it lasted fifty-six years. Racine went on to sixty; Goethe expired peacefully, calling for more light, at eighty-three. And what of the greatest English poet in recent times? Thomas Hardy, who did not even begin to be a professional poet until he was more than fifty-five, wrote ten volumes of verse after that, and when he died at eighty-eight was busy with the preparation of a new volume, which appeared posthumously!

Another burden of which I should like to relieve poets is the burden of being strangely wise. They have been called prophets, I believe, and seers; clairvoyants, informers, transformers, and what not. All this, too, in spite of the impracticality attributed to them. Indeed, there seems to be a connection between the two attributes. The poets know nothing of the world, but they may tell us a good deal about life; not life as we live it, but life—shall we say?—as we ought to live it. Simply by virtue of their stupidity in ordinary affairs they somehow become conversant with extraordinary affairs which we ourselves shall never experience but which it might be rather nice to hear about. So runs another legend, and one as romantic as the rest. For it has no foundation whatever if the whole history of poetry be taken into account. In a primitive tribe the poet is also the medicine man, the priest, and the foreteller of future events, since it is in verse that these functionaries speak. Among savages, then, the poet is a prophet. But nowhere else. The division of labor has gone on; the prophet is the prophet, in verse or in prose as the occasion may be; the poet is the poet, and always in verse. The poet is a sayer, not a seer. Wordsworth brought on a considerable confusion by insisting that the poet is one who goes to Nature for her secrets, which are substantially the secrets of existence, and then comes back with the dew of knowledge on his lips. The poet, in other words, is equipped with a peculiar mind which enables him to plumb—or fathom, or penetrate, or see through, or pierce; the phrase matters not—the world's appearances. For us the mere appearances, for him the reality behind. Thus he not only cursed his successors with the responsibility of being prophets; he cursed them also with the duty of being acquainted with Nature, and of pretending to some sort of mastery over her. The truth, I suspect, is that the poet is no more of a magician in this respect than the scientist is. And think of the poets, long ago and since, who have never been the least bit interested in the out-of-doors. Dr. Johnson said that he was unable to tell the difference between one green field and another. Milton got his flowers and mountains out of old books; Spenser got his landscapes out of sixteenth-century woodcuts; Dante read Nature as a work in theology; Horace was comfortable in the presence of his hills only when a

few friends from Rome were with him to drink wine and make remarks about life; Vergil in the country was concerned with husbandry and the diseases of sheep; Ovid would not look at a tree unless it had once contained a nymph.

The poet may think anything, feel anything, do anything; he may or may not be a wanderer; he may or may not love his home better than any other plot of ground; he may love children; he may hate them; he may be restless under the pressure of a domestic establishment; he may get his chief joy out of a wife and kitchen; he may inhabit a palace; he may shiver in a garret; he may be noble; he may be mean. He is not limited, in other words, more than other men. Yet we go on limiting him. And to what? To a simpering, humorless, pious, nervous existence which for all the world we should be unwilling to share with him. No wonder we don't like him, and no wonder we don't really enjoy reading poetry.

### WHAT IS A POET?

(From Preface to the Lyrical Ballads)

*William Wordsworth* (1800)

WHAT is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men; a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than any other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life,

we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those which, through labor and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, or natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after." He is the rock of defense for human nature, an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labors of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.

## POETRY IN A MACHINE AGE

*Paul Engle (1937)*

THE most evident quality of poetry is intensity—a certain verbal exaggeration. It is that which distinguishes it from prose and from plain speech. It is that which emphasizes what is being said. It is the basis of the pleasure afforded by verse. This intensity is not elaborate description or the piling-up of adjectives. It may be the opposite—a reducing of what is said to its simplest terms, as in the following couplet from Robert Frost:

I often see flowers from a passing car  
That are gone before I can tell what they are.

Or it may be the bare statement of a fact which, although it has nothing at all added, expresses the fact imaginatively, as does MacLeish's calling of the ocean "that endless silence, edged with unending sound." Or the intensification may be achieved by symbol and figurative language. In these lines from *John Brown's Body* the image is completely obvious and clear:

Jack Ellyat turned away from the window now,  
The frosty sleighbell of winter was in his ears,  
He saw the new year, a child in a buffalo-robe.

The image may be far more subtle, as the lines from the German poet Rilke in which he describes a visit to a small church in pre-revolutionary Russia, where he found God crouching in a corner like a wounded and captured animal. Whatever the means of intensification may be, it is always a heightening of the voice, although that may involve a lowering of its sound. It is a lifting of the words like a hand's gesture.

When the vowels and consonants of a line of verse are so skillfully arranged in relation to the sense and to each other that the line seems to vibrate like a taut wire, it is the contribution that this tautness makes to the transference of a certain feeling from one mind into another mind which is important. The sound of the line considered by itself is of less value, however pleasant it may be, than the function it has of emphasizing the meaning through the force of its sound. In this passage from *Conquistador* the swing of the lines makes clearer the feeling in the mind of the writer, thinking of the armored Spaniards who came in their pride and were killed by stone and arrow:

Those with the glaze in their eyes and the fine bearing:  
The born leaders of men: the resonant voices:  
They give them the lands for their tombs: they call it *America*.

It is the mood of the mind, and the accuracy with which the verse repro-

duces it—the attitude toward a thing and not the thing itself—which is the real concern of poetry. Bettors on horse races call this attitude a hunch because it has not been reached rationally, but intuitively. It is for the telling about these hunches that rhythms and forms of verse exist. It is Carl Sandburg writing “See the trees lean to the wind’s way of learning” instead of “See the wind bend the trees.”

If a poet’s business, then, is to communicate his own mind in an intelligible and intensified language, how is the saying that a poet is “representative of his times” to be explained? What is a man like who is, in his verse, representative of today? How has living in a machine age affected the position of a poet who is trying to tell about the excitements in his head?

A poet cannot repudiate his age. If he tries to do so, even his repudiation will belong to it. He is a part of all his environment, both that which he unconsciously takes in, as his eyes automatically acknowledge what confronts them, and that which he consciously acquires, as in the study of folklore and psychiatry. Being so integrated to his age, when he comes to talk about his own character in verse, what he says has not only the individual accent of his own voice but also the larger intonation of his times.

Three forces which belong particularly to the twentieth century have altered the conditions of writing poetry: machinery, psychology, and sociology.

The change that machinery has brought is more than a new collection of sights and sounds and smells, although these are relevant. It is partly the mechanizing of daily acts—the substitution of button-pushing and switch-throwing for acquired skills. But it is far more the revelation of new worlds of power and movement. It is the hands extended, in making an article, to elaborate machines, the nimble fingers losing their genius to the thousand-times more nimble parts of loom and drill press. It is the eye magnified by intricately cut glass, and the ear amplified by the radio, made more sensitive than that of any forest-living creature.

A poet today, seeking for a way to express a great force, will think as readily of compressed steam in a cylinder as of the tides; of an electrical current rather than the strength of an animal. The fact of a human voice thrown out through the air by a machine and being made audible half the world away by another machine is exciting to the imagination. The purring cat’s-head of a dynamo has as great possibilities for becoming as familiarly used in verse as the traditional plow, itself a machine. One of the largest conceptions possible in poetry now is the airplane—man catapulted through space by his own creation.

The machine must not be worshipped as god or devil, nor must it be damned, save when it is misused as in the deadly instruments of war. The poet must accept it as part of his world in the way that the author of *John Brown’s Body* has urged:

Out of John Brown's strong sinews the tall skyscrapers grow,  
 Out of his heart the chanting buildings rise,  
 Rivet and girder, motor and dynamo,  
 Pillar of smoke by day and fire by night,  
 The steel-faced cities reaching at the skies,  
 The whole enormous and rotating cage  
 Hung with hard jewels of electric light. . . .  
 If you at last must have a word to say,  
 Say neither, in their way,  
 "It is a deadly magic and accursed,"  
 Nor "It is blest," but only, "It is here."

The necessary thing is to combine the new machinery with the old—plows, spinning wheels, ships, and wagons. The new is an immensely speeded-up addition to these. Poetry has previously drawn most of its images from nature. It must now draw a greater number from machines, as they displace part of nature in our experience. This is not to imply that poetry must be filled with the whir and clatter of a factory, although it should be at times. The autumnal flight of birds and the turn and pound of a driving wheel should both move through the verse of our time.

Equally with the aspects of nature, machines may be merely described or their relation to men indicated. Or they may be converted into symbols and images as MacKnight Black does in "Reciprocating Engine" from his book of poems, *Machinery*:

The arc of a balance-wheel  
 Flows like a curved rush of swallows, come over a hill. . . .  
 Things lost come again in sudden new beauty.  
 Look long on an engine. It is sweet to the eyes.

In these lines from "Smoke and Steel" Sandburg describes the union of the blood of men and the smoke of fires in the making of steel:

A bar of steel—it is only  
 Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.  
 A runner of fire ran in, ran out, ran somewhere else,  
 And left—smoke and the blood of a man  
 And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

Ultimately the machine must be transformed into a generalized term, as in Auden's looking at something: "As the hawk sees it or the helmeted airman." In these lines from Stephen Spender the machine no longer stands outside the inner motivation of the poem, nor is it merely described. It is an integral part of the original mood and the writing.

More beautiful and soft than any moth  
 With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path

Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines  
Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall  
To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls,  
Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.

The poem convinces you that it was as natural for Spender to write so sympathetically of an airplane as it was for Keats to write of a Grecian urn, or Shelley of the west wind.

The knowledge that the air around him swarms with words and music on radio waves, with the sun's energy and an infinitude of light-waves bearing the appearances of objects, is as important to a poet as it is fascinating. The roaring flame of blast furnaces at night may have for him the same burning terror that the sun has by day. The problem of using science and machines in verse has so far been their impersonality, their lack of human association. We were accustomed to windmills but not to dynamos. We were familiar with a horse-drawn plow but not with tractors, and besides there was an ancient tradition for using the plow and the windmill in poetry. But this is changing. It begins with the child. He plays now with miniature airplanes, streamlined trains, and a multitude of mechanical devices. He sees them represented in the funnies. They will not be strange to him when he grows up. He may have his childhood recalled by the sight, not of a certain flower remembered from his mother's garden, but by the sight of a certain airplane with a distinctive wing—if any model will last that long.

It is often complained that machines, being inanimate, can never even partly displace animate nature in poetry. They say that such a nature image as that in the line "But thine eternal summer shall not fade" can never be replaced by an image from science or machinery. There are two replies to this.

In the first place, much of the nature used in poetry is just as non-living as machines; a season's change is weather as well as plants; and Wordsworth's "something far more deeply interfused" was actually fused with rock and sun as well as daffodils. The traditional comparison of a man's old age to the setting sun shows how an inanimate object may, by long association, acquire the aspect of life. And yet surely the running-down and disrepair of an old machine are more definite images of a man's age, and far more contemporary ones. In the second place, as with the example of the sun above, machines may by constant familiarity acquire that semblance of a life which inanimate objects of nature have long had.

There are many city dwellers today for whom a machine and impersonal environment are far more real and understandable than a nature environment. Nature for them is something kept behind cages in parks or used as an escape from city heat; a place where empty beer cans are thrown on Sunday. The nature tradition of poetry will in time seem for them unreal and irrelevant—as lifeless as machine poetry now seems to many. Their life will have to be expressed in its hard and daily terms, in steel and motor. The clouds are there, over the city, but they are bringers of gutter-streams and coolers of

hot apartment-house roofs rather than nourishers of crops and growing things.

There is one further consideration. Machinery may not serve precisely the same purpose in poetry that nature does, and therefore will not be substituted directly for it. Its function may be to reveal a portion of human life which thus far the use of nature has not been able to reveal, in doing which it will not compete with nature but rather complement and complete it. One specific example of this is the difficulty of expressing man's social relationships in verse by means of the traditional forms and images. It may be that the highly complex and perfectly unified parts of machines, the relationship between separate but interacting machines, and the power that operates through all of them will express social terms and the unity and interaction of social life far better than can anything drawn from nature. With that increasing sympathy for society which will come with understanding, there will rise a stronger motivation to write poetry which deals with specific social and political questions. Anything that affects the lives of men is fit subject for poetry. If the life of this century is going to be one of social unrest and profound efforts to adjust the machine to society, or our social and economic system to a machine age, then poetry will be unavoidably concerned, at least in part, with that unrest.

Modern psychology has altered the position of a poet today less obviously than machinery, and yet as deeply. It has entirely eliminated the inspiration theory of writing by showing that poems derive not from some external source but from such immediate and internal influences as a childhood memory unconsciously retained, last night's supper, a forgotten conversation, and the terrible directness of dreams. It has proved that the condition of mind from which a poet writes is not isolated, separate from his complete person or even a unique and entirely single feeling, but rather the fulfillment of the total person—the end result of nerve, muscle, emotion, idea—twisted by the imagination into a unified form. However humiliating to the poet, it can be said of some poetry that it comes not from the mind alone but from the glands.

As much understanding of the intricate working of the human mind as possible is necessary to the poet. Until now this has come largely through the qualities of sympathy and intuition. But these can be supplemented today by all that psychology has contributed to opening the dark area of the mind. Not only has it enlarged our comprehension of past literature, as of the characters in Shakespeare, but it has expanded our belief about what should go into future literature. What we know of the sex impulse may not give us a deeper sense of the power of love in human affairs, but it will surely give us increased understanding in writing about it. Inhibition and repression have been the cause and source of much verse. A true knowledge of them may be able to make them subjects, however indirectly, of verse.

It must not be thought that poems will become case histories. The poet



can use the analyses of a psychiatrist without simply versifying them. He will use them to help interpret the actions of men. As with machinery, psychology is something to be added to our customary ways of thinking and of writing. It is not intended to replace them. Its purpose is to increase the capacity of poetry to express the time in which it is written and the men who live in that time.

Just as science and its creation, machinery, have advanced knowledge of our material environment, and psychology knowledge of personality, so has sociology increased knowledge of our social environment. We realize now the multitude of forces working on the individual that come not from nature or from within himself but from society. The daily dependence of every man on legions of other men he has never seen, and the existence of a vast social structure, greater than the sum of all its living parts, are important to the poet—as important as the fact of the earth turning in day and night.

As a poet better understands his social being, he will turn with greater interest toward it. Social phenomena and feeling may suffuse his verse as natural phenomena have. It may be that society will become as compelling and dominant for some poet as nature was for Wordsworth; that the energy running through all men and connecting them in one organic whole will charge his mind with as strong an electric current as that sense of a natural power in all things charged the mind of Wordsworth, producing in each a mood of mingling with a will and a being greater than himself. The difference between the two conditions is that a man can associate himself with nature but not alter it, passively letting his personality respond to its impulses; but a man is able to merge himself with society and yet move actively to change it, in which he has the amazing and human faculty of changing himself.

Certainly poetry will as a whole become more "social-minded." It will react instinctively to social movements as it once did to the moving wind. Poetry has already come out of the tower to talk with men and women on the street, and it can never go back. In these days of universal conscription a poet must be interested in an armament bill in Washington or Westminster and in the foreign policy of his own and all other nations, for they may affect his own life deeply or end it. He must be aware, in a time when so many millions of lives depend on an industrial system's working smoothly, of economic changes and forces which control these millions. A wage rise or fall has as strong and immediate an impact on factory workers as even rainfall or good and bad crops had on an agricultural people.

One result of this awareness will be the desire to use common speech and contemporary images, and new verse forms and cadences to fit them. MacLeish, in a note to his verse-play *Panic*, has argued that modern dramatic verse must be the opposite of Elizabethan; that today the American voice drops away toward the end of its sentence or its speaking, and so the line of verse must fall away. Elizabethan verse rose toward the end because men spoke with a rising inflection. Hence the strong endings in plays of that time

and the weak endings of MacLeish's verse. I do not agree with this, but it is such a searching for a form to match the speech that we need. In America our verse has tended more and more to match the rhythms of speech. With this tendency, and our enormous facilities for communication by radio, book, and newspaper, verse may come to be written for the medium in which it will appear. As the ballads were written for singing, so may a new kind of verse be written for the radio. The movies should produce a highly rhythmic and onomatopoeic verse to be spoken with music, which was written inseparably for the verse. I have heard a poem of the young English poet W. H. Auden, written especially for the occasion, read during the showing of a film depicting the passage of a night mail train to the north of England. The verse, like the film, followed the progress and speed of the train through village and valley, both in its details and in its sounds. It was very exciting to watch dawn moving over the dark northern hills and to hear it carefully described in strong verse.

This concern with social life has already produced one result—an increase of politics in verse that is almost an invasion. It is not new. Milton was moved to write a sonnet on the late massacre in Piedmont. Shelley, far away in Italy, wrote a long poem condemning the "Peterloo massacre" in 1819, when a huge crowd of people, meeting outside Manchester to protest certain policies of the government, was fired upon by soldiers. Shelley wrote numerous poems directly dealing with the politics of his time and with republicanism in a time when to be a republican was far more dangerous than to be a communist in England now. The Russian Revolution has moved many poets, especially in France and England, as deeply as the French Revolution moved Wordsworth.

One of the most curious means of enlarging our expression both of contemporary life and of the ancient human instincts has been the utilization of one of the newest sciences, anthropology. What has been discovered about prehistoric and primitive peoples is used to interpret the most civilized of men. T. S. Eliot acknowledges his debt, in writing *The Waste Land*, to Frazer's *Golden Bough*, especially the Adonis and Osiris volumes, and to Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. MacLeish's *Pot of Earth* is filled with the study of fertility legends and rites. Auden has written of the primitivism of music:

The string's excitement, the applauding drum  
Are but the initiating ceremony  
That out of cloud the ancestral face may come.

And of the personality's urge to assure its own nature:

And all emotions to expression came,  
Recovering the archaic imagery;  
This longing for assurance takes the form  
Of a hawk's vertical swooping at the sky. . . .

Should the facilities for understanding the nature of personality increase as rapidly in this century as the facilities for understanding the nature of matter increased in the last, we shall have the possibility of putting into verse such a comprehension of the character and motivations of men as has not been thought of. One result has already been the struggle of the ego to maintain its validity in face of the annihilating knowledge both of it and of society and of the world of energy and matter which this century has revealed. Poetry was for a while in the twenties a chant of the unimportance of the self. *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is a type of utter self-flagellation in verse—an assertion that the individual, in spite of his preoccupation with his own mind, is meaningless before the huge complexities of modern life. Here is the complete statement of man as petty, valueless, and doomed:

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be,  
Am an attendant Lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the Prince, no doubt an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use. . . .

I do not wish to repudiate all poetry which comes from the self and is entirely about it. Surely poets will use their new knowledge and understanding to interpret not only other men and social groups but themselves. They may be led to an examination of their minds so deep that it is terrifying. But those with courage will use their new material and not be used by it, although it involves stretching their minds out on a board like a pinned moth. John Lehmann wrote of this:

To penetrate that room is my desire,  
The extreme attic of the mind that lies  
Just beyond the last bend in the corridor.

Some poets have tried to solve the problem of the self by going beyond it in historical or social poetry, where the self is concealed in objective action or in a political movement. The individual is merged in something so much bigger than himself that he disappears, losing his identity, save in so far as the whole external action may be an image of his mind. These poets seek a way in which the immense awareness of our time can be asserted on a broader scale than one man. Men may say of the self what Stephen Spender said:

What I had not foreseen  
Was the gradual day  
Weakening the will,  
Leaking the brightness away. . . .

But others will say that there is a vaster will than the self's own which works through that gradual day, and a brightness which burns when the small flame goes out.

This finding of the individual inadequate, and his private feelings insufficient for all the poetry a man writes, does not mean that the individuality of men will be destroyed. It may, on the contrary, be the salvation of the individual today. If a man stands out in solitary aloofness from his time, he may drown in it. But in losing his lone self he may find it in a more powerful and daring state of being. Some find it in the necessity of faith, some in the exhilarating purge of action, and some in a belief demanding action. C. Day Lewis has praised this man who has solved his private fate by mingling with a public one:

For those who had the power,  
Unhesitating whether to kill or cure:  
Those who were not afraid  
To dam the estuary or start the forest fire:  
Whose hearts were filled  
With enthusiasm as with a constant wind . . .  
There need be no obituary nor wreath,  
Accomplices of death . . .  
Their spirit shall be blowing out of the sunrise,  
Their veins our rivers, their bones our bread.

That spirit blowing out of the sunrise is the moving force toward which men, whose way of talking is that high and tense speech called "poetry," will more and more turn their waiting faces.

## DOVER BEACH REVISITED

A NEW FABLE FOR CRITICS

*Theodore Morrison* (1940)

EARLY in the year 1939 a certain Professor of Educational Psychology, occupying a well-paid chair at a large endowed university, conceived a plot. From his desk in the imposing Hall of the Social Sciences, where the Research Institute in Education was housed, he had long burned with resentment against teachers of literature, especially against English departments. It seemed to him that the professors of English stood square across the path of his major professional ambition. His great desire in life was to introduce into the study, the teaching, the critical evaluation of literature some of the systematic method, some of the "objective procedure," as he liked to call it, some of the certainty of result which he believed to be characteristic of the physical sciences. "You make such a fetish of science," a colleague once said to him, "why aren't you a chemist?"—a question that annoyed him deeply.

If such a poem as Milton's "Lycidas" has a value—and most English teachers, even to-day, would start with that as a cardinal fact—then that

value must be measurable and expressible in terms that do not shift and change from moment to moment and person to person with every subjective whim. They would agree, these teachers of literature, these professors of English, that the value of the poem is in some sense objective; they would never agree to undertake any objective procedure to determine what that value is. They would not clearly define what they meant by achievement in the study of literature, and they bridled and snorted when anyone else attempted to define it. He remembered what had happened when he had once been incautious enough to suggest to a professor of English in his own college that it might be possible to establish norms for the appreciation of Milton. The fellow had simply exploded into a peal of histrionic laughter and then had tried to wither him with an equally histrionic look of incredulity and disgust.

He would like to see what would happen if the teachers of English were forced or lured, by some scheme or other, into a public exposure of their position. It would put them in the light of intellectual charlatanism, nothing less . . . and suddenly Professor Chartly (for so he was nicknamed) began to see his way.

It was a simple plan that popped into his head, simple yet bold and practical. It was a challenge that could not be refused. A strategically placed friend in one of the large educational foundations could be counted on: there would be money for clerical expenses, for travel if need be. He took his pipe from his pocket, filled it, and began to puff exultantly. To-morrow he must broach the scheme to one or two colleagues; to-night, over cheese and beer, would not be too soon. He reached for the telephone.

The plan that he unfolded to his associates that evening aroused considerable skepticism at first, but gradually they succumbed to his enthusiasm. A number of well-known professors of literature at representative colleges up and down the land would be asked to write a critical evaluation of a poem prominent enough to form part of the standard reading in all large English courses. They would be asked to state the criteria on which they based their judgment. When all the answers had been received the whole dossier would be sent to a moderator, a trusted elder statesman of education, known everywhere for his dignity, liberality of intelligence, and long experience. He would be asked to make a preliminary examination of all the documents and to determine from the point of view of a teacher of literature whether they provided any basis for a common understanding. The moderator would then forward all the documents to Professor Chartly, who would make what in his own mind he was frank to call a more scientific analysis. Then the jaws of the trap would be ready to spring.

Once the conspirators had agreed on their plot their first difficulty came in the choice of a poem. Suffice it to say that someone eventually hit on Arnold's "Dover Beach," and the suggestion withstood all attack. "Dover Beach" was universally known, almost universally praised; it was remote enough so that contemporary jealousies and cults were not seriously involved,

yet near enough not to call for any special expertness, historical or linguistic, as a prerequisite for judgment; it was generally given credit for skill as a work of art, yet it contained also, in its author's own phrase, a "criticism of life."

Rapidly in the days following the first meeting the representative teachers were chosen and invited to participate in the plan. Professional courtesy seemed to require the inclusion of an Arnold expert. But the one selected excused himself from producing a value judgment of "Dover Beach" on the ground that he was busy investigating a fresh clue to the identity of "Marguerite." He had evidence that the woman in question, after the episode hinted at in the famous poems, had married her deceased sister's husband, thus perhaps affecting Arnold's views on a social question about which he had said a good deal in his prose writings. The expert pointed out that he had been given a half-year's leave of absence and a research grant to pursue the shadow of Marguerite through Europe, wherever it might lead him. If only war did not break out, he hoped to complete this research and solve one of the vexing problems that had always confronted Arnold's biographers. His energies would be too much engaged in this special investigation to deal justly with the more general questions raised by Professor Chartly's invitation. But he asked to be kept informed, since the results of the experiment could not fail to be of interest to him.

After a few hitches and delays from other quarters, the scheme was ripe. The requests were mailed out, and the Professor of Educational Psychology sat back in grim confidence to await the outcome.

## II

It chanced that the first of the representative teachers who received and answered Professor Chartly's letter was thought of on his own campus as giving off a distinct though not unpleasant odor of the ivory tower. He would have resented the imputation himself. At forty-five Bradley Dewing was handsome in a somewhat speciously virile style, graying at the temples, but still well-knit and active. He prided himself on being able to beat most of his students at tennis; once a year he would play the third or fourth man on the varsity and go down to creditable defeat with some elegiac phrases on the ravages of time. He thought of himself as a man of the world; it was well for his contentment, which was seldom visibly ruffled, that he never heard the class mimic reproducing at a fraternity house or beer parlor his manner of saying: "After all, gentlemen, it is pure poetry that lasts. We must never forget the staying power of pure art." The class mimic never represents the whole of class opinion but he can usually make everyone within earshot laugh.

Professor Dewing could remember clearly what his own teachers had said about "Dover Beach" in the days when he was a freshman in college himself,

phrases rounded with distant professorial unction: faith and doubt in the Victorian era; disturbing influence of Darwin on religious beliefs; Browning the optimist; Tennyson coming up with firm faith after a long struggle in the waters of doubt; Matthew Arnold, prophet of skepticism. How would "Dover Beach" stack up now as a poem? Pull Arnold down from the shelf and find out.

Ah, yes, how the familiar phrases came back. "The sea is calm, the tide is full, the cliffs of England stand . . ." And then the lines he particularly liked:

Come to the window, sweet is the night air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd sand,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow . . .

Good poetry, that! No one could mistake it. Onomatopoeia was a relatively cheap effect most of the time. Poe, for instance: "And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain." Anyone could put a string of s's together and make them rustle. But these lines in "Dover Beach" were different. The onomatopoeia was involved in the whole scene, and it in turn involved the whole rhythmical movement of the verse, not the mere noise made by the consonants or vowels as such. The pauses—only, listen, draw back, fling, begin, cease—how they infused a subdued melancholy into the moonlit panorama at the same time that they gave it the utmost physical reality by suggesting the endless iteration of the waves! And then the phrase "With tremulous cadence slow" coming as yet one more touch, one "fine excess," when it seemed that every phrase and pause the scene could bear had already been lavished on it: that was Miltonic, Vergilian.

But the rest of the poem?

The sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled . . .

Of course, Arnold had evoked the whole scene only to bring before us this metaphor of faith in its ebb-tide. But that did not save the figure from triteness and from an even more fatal vagueness. Everything in second-rate poetry is compared to the sea: love is as deep, grief as salty, passion as turbulent. The sea may look like a bright girdle sometimes, though Professor Dewing did not think it particularly impressive to say so. And in what sense is *faith* a bright girdle? Is it the function of faith to embrace, to bind, to hold up a petticoat, or what? And what is the faith that Arnold has in mind? The poet evokes no precise concept of it. He throws us the simple, undifferentiated

word, unites its loose emotional connotations with those of the sea, and leaves the whole matter there. And the concluding figure of "Dover Beach":

we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Splendid in itself, this memorable image. But the sea had been forgotten now; the darkling plain had displaced the figure from which the whole poem tacitly promised to evolve. It would not have been so if John Donne had been the craftsman. A single bold yet accurate analogy, with constantly developing implications, would have served him for the whole poem.

Thus mused Professor Dewing, the lines of his verdict taking shape in his head. A critic of poetry, of course, was not at liberty to pass judgment on a poet's thought; he could only judge whether, in treating of the thought or sensibility he had received from his age, the poet had produced a satisfactory work of art. Arnold, Professor Dewing felt, had not been able to escape from the didactic tone or from a certain commonness and vagueness of expression. With deep personal misgivings about his position in a world both socially and spiritually barbarous, he had sought an image for his emotion, and had found it in the sea—a natural phenomenon still obscured by the drapings of conventional beauty and used by all manner of poets to express all manner of feelings. "Dover Beach" would always remain notable, Professor Dewing decided, as an expression of Victorian sensibility. It contained lines of ever memorable poetic skill. But it could not, he felt, be accepted as a uniformly satisfactory example of poetic art.

### III

It was occasionally a source of wonder to those about him just why Professor Oliver Twitchell spent so much time and eloquence urging that man's lower nature must be repressed, his animal instincts kept in bounds by the exertion of the higher will. To the casual observer, Professor Twitchell himself did not seem to possess much animal nature. It seemed incredible that a desperate struggle with powerful bestial passions might be going on at any moment within his own slight frame, behind his delicate white face in which the most prominent feature was the octagonal glasses that focused his eyes on the outside world. Professor Twitchell was a good deal given to discipleship but not much to friendship. He had himself been a disciple of the great Irving Babbitt, and he attracted a small number of disciples among his own more earnest students. But no one knew him well. Only one of his colleagues, who took a somewhat sardonic interest in the mysteries of human nature, possessed a possible clue to the origin of his efforts to repress man's lower nature and vindicate his higher. This colleague had wormed his way sufficiently into Oliver Twitchell's confidence to learn about his family, which



he did not often mention. Professor Twitchell, it turned out, had come of decidedly unacademic stock. One of his brothers was the chief salesman for a company that made domestic fire-alarm appliances. At a moment's notice he would whip out a sample from his bag or pocket, plug it into the nearest electric outlet, and while the bystanders waited in terrified suspense, would explain that in the dead of night, if the house caught fire, the thing would go off with a whoop loud enough to warn the soundest sleeper. Lined up with his whole string of brothers and sisters, all older than he, all abounding in spirits, Professor Twitchell looked like the runt of the litter. His colleague decided that he must have had a very hard childhood, and that it was not his own animal nature that he needed so constantly to repress, but his family's.

Whatever the reasons, Professor Twitchell felt no reality in the teaching of literature except as he could extract from it definitions and illustrations of man's moral struggle in the world. For him recent history had been a history of intellectual confusion and degradation, and hence of social confusion and degradation. Western thought had fallen into a heresy. It had failed to maintain the fundamental grounds of a true humanism. It had blurred the distinction between man, God, and nature. Under the influence of the sciences, it had set up a monism in which the moral as well as the physical constitution of man was included within nature and the laws of nature. It had, therefore, exalted man as naturally good, and exalted the free expression of all his impulses. What were the results of this heresy? An age, complained Professor Twitchell bitterly, in which young women talked about sexual perversions at the dinner table; an age in which everyone agreed that society was in dissolution and insisted on the privilege of being dissolute; an age without any common standards of value in morals or art; an age, in short, without discipline, without self-restraint in private life or public.

Oliver Twitchell, when he received Professor Chartly's envelope, sat down with a strong favorable predisposition toward his task. He accepted wholeheartedly Arnold's attitude toward literature: the demand that poetry should be serious, that it should present us with a criticism of life, that it should be measured by standards not merely personal, but in some sense *real*.

"Dover Beach" had become Arnold's best-known poem, admired as his masterpiece. It would surely contain, therefore, a distillation of his attitude. Professor Twitchell pulled down his copy of Arnold and began to read; and as he read he felt himself overtaken by surprised misgiving. The poem began well enough. The allusion to Sophocles, who had heard the sound of the retreating tide by the Ægean centuries ago, admirably prepared the groundwork of high seriousness for a poem which would culminate in a real criticism of human experience. But did the poem so culminate? It was true that the world

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain

if one meant the world as the worldling knows it, the man who conducts his life by unreflective natural impulse. Such a man will soon enough encounter the disappointments of ambition, the instability of all bonds and ties founded on nothing firmer than passion or self-interest. But this incertitude of the world, to a true disciple of culture, should become a means of self-discipline. It should lead him to ask how life may be purified and ennobled, how we may by wisdom and self-restraint oppose to the accidents of the world a true human culture based on the exertion of a higher will. No call to such a positive moral will, Professor Twitchell reluctantly discovered, can be heard in "Dover Beach." Man is an ignorant soldier struggling confusedly in a blind battle. Was this the culminating truth that Arnold the poet had given men in his masterpiece? Professor Twitchell sadly revised his value-judgment of the poem. He could not feel that in his most widely admired performance Arnold had seen life steadily or seen it whole; rather he had seen it only on its worldly side, and seen it under an aspect of terror. "Dover Beach" would always be justly respected for its poetic art, but the famous lines on Sophocles better exemplified the poet as a critic of life.

#### IV

As a novelist still referred to in his late thirties as "young" and "promising," Rudolph Mole found himself in a curious relation toward his academic colleagues. He wrote for the public, not for the learned journals; hence he was spared the necessity of becoming a pedant. At the same time the more lucrative fruits of pedantry were denied to him by his quiet exclusion from the guild. Younger men, sweating for promotion, living in shabby genteel poverty on yearly appointments, their childless wives mimicking their academic shop-talk in bluestocking phrases, would look up from the stacks of five-by-three cards on which they were constantly accumulating notes and references, and would say to him, "You don't realize how lucky you are, teaching composition. You aren't expected to know anything." Sometimes an older colleague, who had passed through several stages of the mysteries of preferment, would belittle professional scholarship to him with an elaborate show of graciousness and envy. "We are all just pedants," he would say. "You teach the students what they really want and need." Rudolph noticed that the self-confessed pedant went busily on publishing monographs and being promoted, while he himself remained, year by year, the English Department's most eminent poor relation.

He was not embittered. His dealings with students were pleasant and interesting. There was a sense of reality and purpose in trying to elicit from them a better expression of their thoughts, trying to increase their understanding of the literary crafts. He could attack their minds on any front he chose, and he could follow his intellectual hobbies as freely as he liked, with-

out being confined to the artificial boundaries of a professional field of learning.

Freud, for example. When Professor Chartly and his accomplices decided that a teacher of creative writing should be included in their scheme and chose Rudolph Mole for the post, they happened to catch him at the height of his enthusiasm for Freud. Not that he expected to psychoanalyze authors through their works; that, he avowed, was not his purpose. You can't deduce the specific secrets of a man's life, he would cheerfully admit, by trying to fit his works into the text-book patterns of complexes and psychoses. The critic, in any case, is interested only in the man to the extent that he is involved in his work. But everyone agrees, Rudolph maintained, that the man is involved in his work. Some part of the psychic constitution of the author finds expression in every line that he writes. We can't understand the work unless we can understand the psychic traits that have gained expression in it. We may never be able to trace back these traits to their ultimate sources and causes, probably buried deep in the author's childhood. But we need to gain as much light on them as we can, since they appear in the work we are trying to apprehend, and determine its character. This is what criticism has always sought to do. Freud simply brings new light to the old task.

Rudolph was fortunate enough at the outset to pick up at the college bookstore a copy of Mr. Lionel Trilling's recent study of Matthew Arnold. In this volume he found much of his work already done for him. A footnote to Mr. Trilling's text, citing evidence from Professors Tinker and Lowry, made it clear that "Dover Beach" may well have been written in 1850, some seventeen years before it was first published. This, for Rudolph's purposes, was a priceless discovery. It meant that all the traditional talk about the poem was largely null and void. The poem was not a repercussion of the bombshell that Darwin dropped on the religious sensibilities of the Victorians. It was far more deeply personal and individual than that. Perhaps when Arnold published it his own sense of what it expressed or how it would be understood had changed. But clearly the poem came into being as an expression of what Arnold felt to be the particular kind of affection and passion he needed from a woman. It was a love poem, and took its place with utmost naturalness, once the clue had been given, in the group of similar and related poems addressed to "Marguerite." Mr. Trilling summed up in a fine sentence one strain in these poems, and the principal strain in "Dover Beach," when he wrote that for Arnold "fidelity is a word relevant only to those lovers who see the world as a place of sorrow and in their common suffering require the comfort of constancy."

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world . . .  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light . . .

The point was unmistakable. And from the whole group of poems to which "Dover Beach" belonged, a sketch of Arnold as an erotic personality could be derived. The question whether a "real Marguerite" existed was an idle one, for the traits that found expression in the poems were at least "real" enough to produce the poems and to determine their character.

And what an odd spectacle it made, the self-expressed character of Arnold as a lover! The ordinary degree of aggressiveness, the normal joy of conquest and possession, seemed to be wholly absent from him. The love he asked for was essentially a protective love, sisterly or motherly; in its unavoidable ingredient of passion he felt a constant danger, which repelled and unsettled him. He addressed Marguerite as "My sister!" He avowed and deplored his own womanish fits of instability:

I too have wish'd, no woman more,  
This starting, feverish heart away.

He emphasized his nervous anguish and contrary impulses. He was a "teas'd o'erlabour'd heart," "an aimless unallay'd Desire." He could not break through his fundamental isolation and submerge himself in another human soul, and he believed that all men shared this plight:

Yes: in the sea of life enisld,  
With echoing straits between us thrown,  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
We mortal millions live *alone*.

He never "without remorse" allowed himself

To haunt the place where passions reign,

yet it was clear that whether he had ever succeeded in giving himself up wholeheartedly to a passion, he had wanted to. There could hardly be a more telltale phrase than "Once-long'd-for storms of love."

In short, much more illumination fell on "Dover Beach" from certain other verses of Arnold's than from Darwin and all his commentators:

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts  
Wounded by men, by Fortune tried,  
Outwearied with their lonely parts,  
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear;  
Their lot was but to weep and moan.  
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,  
For neither could subsist alone!

Here was the nub. "Dover Beach" grew directly from and repeated the same emotion, but no doubt generalized and enlarged this emotion, sweeping

into one intense and far-reaching conviction of insecurity not only Arnold's personal fortunes in love, but the social and religious faith of the world he lived in. That much could be said for the traditional interpretation.

Of course, as Mr. Trilling did not fail to mention, anguished love affairs, harassed by mysterious inner incompatibilities, formed a well-established literary convention. But the fundamental sense of insecurity in "Dover Beach" was too genuine, too often repeated in other works, to be written off altogether to that account. The same sense of insecurity, the same need for some rock of protection, cried out again and again, not merely in Arnold's love poems but in his elegies, reflective pieces, and fragments of epic as well. Whenever Arnold produced a genuine and striking burst of poetry, with the stamp of true self-expression on it, he seemed always to be in the dumps. Everywhere dejection, confusion, weakness, contention of soul. No adequate cause could be found in the events of Arnold's life for such an acute sense of incertitude; it must have been of psychic origin. Only in one line of effort this fundamental insecurity did not hamper, sadden, or depress him, and that was in the free play of his intelligence as a critic of letters and society. Even there, if it did not hamper his efforts, it directed them. Arnold valiantly tried to erect a barrier of culture against the chaos and squalor of society, against the contentiousness of men. What was this barrier but an elaborate protective device?

The origin of the psychic pattern that expressed itself in Arnold's poems could probably never be discovered. No doubt the influence that Arnold's father exercised over his emotions and his thinking, even though Arnold rebelled to the extent at least of casting off his father's religious beliefs, was of great importance. But much more would have to be known to give a definite clue—more than ever could be known. Arnold was secure from any attempt to spy out the heart of his mystery. But if criticism could not discover the cause, it could assess the result, and could do so (thought Rudolph Mole) with greater understanding by an attempt, with up-to-date psychological aid, to delve a little deeper into the essential traits that manifested themselves in that result.

## V

In 1917 Reuben Hale, a young instructor in a Western college, had lost his job and done time in the penitentiary for speaking against conscription and for organizing pacifist demonstrations. In the twenties he had lost two more academic posts for his sympathies with Soviet Russia and his inability to forget his Marxist principles while teaching literature. His contentious, eager, lovable, exasperating temperament tried the patience of one college administration after another. As he advanced into middle age, and his growing family suffered repeated upheavals, his friends began to fear that his robust quarrels with established order would leave him a penniless outcast at fifty. Then he was invited to take a flattering post at a girls' college known

for its liberality of views. The connection proved surprisingly durable; in fact, it became Professor Hale's turn to be apprehensive. He began to be morally alarmed at his own security, to fear that the bourgeois system which he had attacked so valiantly had somehow outwitted him and betrayed him into allegiance. When the C.I.O. made its initial drive and seemed to be carrying everything before it, he did his best to unseat himself again by rushing joyfully to the nearest picket lines and getting himself photographed by an alert press. Even this expedient failed, and he reconciled himself, not without wonder, to apparent academic permanence.

On winter afternoons his voice could be heard booming out through the closed door of his study to girls who came to consult him on all manner of subjects, from the merits of Plekhanov as a Marxist critic to their own most personal dilemmas. They called him Ben; he called them Smith, Jones, and Robinson. He never relaxed his cheerful bombardment of the milieu into which they were born, and of the larger social structure which made bourgeois wealth, bourgeois art, morals, and religion possible. But when a sophomore found herself pregnant it was to Professor Hale that she came for advice. Should she have an abortion or go through with it and heroically bear the social stigma? And it was Professor Hale who kept the affair from the Dean's office and the newspapers, sought out the boy, persuaded the young couple that they were desperately in love with each other, and that pending the revolution a respectable marriage would be the most prudent course, not to say the happiest.

James Joyce remarks of one of his characters that she dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat. Professor Hale's critical methods were comparably simple and direct. Literature, like the other arts, is in form and substance a product of society, and reflects the structure of society. The structure of society is a class structure: it is conditioned by the mode of production of goods, and by the legal conventions of ownership and control by which the ruling class keeps itself in power and endows itself with the necessary freedom to exploit men and materials for profit. A healthy literature, in a society so constituted, can exist only if writers perceive the essential economic problem and ally themselves firmly with the working class.

Anyone could see the trouble with Arnold. His intelligence revealed to him the chaos that disrupted the society about him; the selfishness and brutality of the ruling class; the ugliness of the world which the industrial revolution had created, and which imperialism and "liberalism" were extending. Arnold was at his best in his critical satire of this world and of the ignorance of those who governed it. But his intelligence far outran his will, and his defect of will finally blinded his intelligence. He was too much a child of his class to disown it and fight his way to a workable remedy for social injustice. He caught a true vision of himself and of his times as standing between "two worlds, one dead, one powerless to be born." But he had not courage or stomach enough to lend his own powers to the birth struggle. Had he thrown

in his sympathies unreservedly with the working class, and labored for the inescapable revolution, "Dover Beach" would not have ended in pessimism and confusion. It would have ended in a cheerful, strenuous, and hopeful call to action. But Arnold could not divorce himself from the world of polite letters, of education, of culture, into which he had been born. He did his best to purify them, to make them into an instrument for the reform of society. But instinctively he knew that "culture" as he understood the term was not a social force in the world around him. Instinctively he knew that what he loved was doomed to defeat. And so "Dover Beach" ended in a futile plea for protection against the hideousness of the darkling plain and the confused alarms of struggle and flight.

Professor Chartly's envelope brought Reuben Hale his best opportunity since the first C.I.O. picket lines to vindicate his critical and social principles. He plunged into his answer with complete zest.

## VI

When Peter Lee Prampton agreed to act as moderator in Professor Chartly's experiment he congratulated himself that this would be his last great academic chore. He had enjoyed his career of scholarship and teaching, no man ever more keenly. But now it was drawing to an end. He was loaded with honors from two continents. The universities of Germany, France, and Britain had first laid their formative hands on his learning and cultivation, then given their most coveted recognition to its fruits. But the honor and the glory seemed a little vague on the June morning when the expressman brought into his library the sizable package of papers which Professor Chartly had boxed and shipped to him. He had kept all his life a certain simplicity of heart. At seventy-four he could still tote a pack with an easy endurance that humiliated men of forty. Now he found himself giving in more and more completely to a lust for trout. Half a century of hastily snatched vacations in Cape Breton or the Scottish Highlands had never allowed him really to fill up that hollow craving to find a wild stream and fish it, which would sometimes rise in his throat even in the midst of a lecture.

Well, there would be time left before he died. And meanwhile here was this business of "Dover Beach." Matthew Arnold, during one of his American lecture tours, had been entertained by neighbors of the Pramptons. Peter Lee Prampton's father had dined with the great man, and had repeated his conversation and imitated his accent at the family table. Peter himself, as a boy of nineteen or so, had gone to hear Arnold lecture. That, he thought with a smile, was probably a good deal more than could be said for any of these poor hacks who had taken Professor Chartly's bait.

At the thought of Arnold he could still hear the carriage wheels grate on the pebbly road as he had driven, fifty-odd years ago, to the lecture in town, the prospective Mrs. Prampton beside him. His fishing rod lay under the seat.

He chuckled out loud as he remembered how a pound-and-a-half trout had jumped in the pool under the clattering planks of a bridge, and how he had pulled up the horse, jumped out, and tried a cast while Miss Osgood sat scolding in the carriage and shivering in the autumn air. They had been just a little late reaching the lecture, but the trout, wrapped in damp leaves, lay safely beside the rod.

It was queer that "Dover Beach" had not come more recently into his mind. Now that he turned his thoughts in that direction the poem was there in its entirety, waiting to be put on again like a coat that one has worn many times with pleasure and accidentally neglected for a while.

The sea of faith was once, too, at the full.

How those old Victorian battles had raged about the Prampton table when he was a boy! How the names of Arnold, Huxley, Darwin, Carlyle, Morris, Ruskin had been pelted back and forth by the excited disputants! *Literature and Dogma*, *God and the Bible*, *Culture and Anarchy*. The familiar titles brought an odd image into his mind: the tall figure of his father stretching up to turn on the gas lamps in the evening as the family sat down to dinner; the terrific pop of the pilot light as it exploded into a net of white flame, shaped like a little beehive; the buzz and whine of a jet turned up too high.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain . . .

Peter Lee Prampton shivered in the warmth of the sunny library, shivered with that flash of perception into the past which sometimes enables a man to see how all that has happened in his life, for good or ill, turned on the narrowest edge of chance. He lived again in the world of dreams that his own youth had spread before him, a world truly various, beautiful, and new; full of promise, adventure, and liberty of choice, based on the opportunities which his father's wealth provided, and holding out the prospect of a smooth advance into a distinguished career. Then, within six months, a lavish demonstration that the world has neither certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain: his mother's death by cancer, his father's financial overthrow and suicide, the ruin of his own smooth hopes and the prospect instead of a long, hampered, and obscure fight toward his perhaps impossible ambition. He lived again through the night hours when he had tramped out with himself the youthful question whether he could hold Miss Osgood to her promise in the face of such reversals. And he did not forget how she took his long-sleepless face between her hands, kissed him, and smiled away his anxiety with unsteady



lips. Surely everyone discovers at some time or other that the world is not a place of certitude; surely everyone cries out to some other human being for the fidelity which alone can make it so. What more could be asked of a poet than to take so profound and universal an experience and turn it into lines that could still speak long after he and his age were dead?

The best of it was that no one could miss the human feeling, the cry from the heart, in "Dover Beach"; it spoke so clearly and eloquently, in a language everyone could understand, in a form classically pure and simple. Or did it? Who could tell what any job-lot of academicians might be trusted to see or fail to see? And this assortment in Chartly's package might be a queer kettle of fish! Peter Lee Prampton had lived through the *Yellow Book* days of Art for Art's sake; he had read the muckrakers, and watched the rise of the Marxists and the Freudians. Could "Dover Beach" be condemned as unsympathetic with labor? Could a neurosis or a complex be discovered in it? His heart sank at the sharp sudden conviction that indeed these and worse discoveries about the poem might be seriously advanced. Well, he had always tried to go on the principle that every school of criticism should be free to exercise any sincere claim on men's interest and attention which it could win for itself. When he actually applied himself to the contents of Professor Chartly's bale he would be as charitable as he could, as receptive to light from any quarter as he could bring himself to be.

But the task could wait. He felt the need of a period of adjustment before he could approach it with reasonable equanimity. And in the meanwhile he could indulge himself in some long-needed editorial work on his dry-fly book.

## THE LONG ARM OF HOLLYWOOD

Leo C. Rosten (1941)

In the four corners of the globe, who reads an American book, or goes to an American play, or looks at an American picture . . . ?—*Sydney Smith, 1820*

LORD NORTHCLIFFE called motion pictures "the fifth estate." It is a valuable phrase. The frequency with which we hear the cliché "press, radio, and movies" testifies to the recognition that Hollywood is one of the key symbol-centers of the world. The influence of Hollywood is immense and pervasive. It is an influence which transcends differences in language or custom, age or creed. It is an influence which ranges from slang and songs to the export of typewriters or the pattern of women's coiffures. It is an influence which, to repeat a Frenchman's comment, threatened a colonization of the world by the American culture whose films are its most potent and energetic carriers. It is an influence which springs from two sources: the movies and the movie stars.

The long arm of Hollywood reaches into every province of the manners and the mores of our time; it does not, except obliquely and occasionally, touch the ideologies of our day. The movie makers are beholden to a mass market; they are saddled with enormous costs; they know that ideas attract controversy; and they shape their stories into fables which testify to the proposition that maximum profits reward maximum innocuousness.

The extraordinary significance of the movies is illustrated by the fact that of all the contemporary arts—and businesses—it was the movies which were singled out for discussion in a special papal encyclical devoted to that purpose (Pius XI, July 2, 1936). And the potency of films, the threat to national policies or private interests which they can be assumed to represent, is demonstrated by the astonishing variety of protests which pour into Hollywood week after week. The expostulations against movies, from governments, foreign offices, business groups, religious orders, trade associations, fraternal societies, or professional bodies are nothing short of cosmic in their range and in their substance.

The Japanese censors, for example, strongly objected to a Hollywood version of *Madame Butterfly* because Sylvia Sidney, in kissing Lieutenant Pinkerton (the scene was handled with pathetic caution), placed her arms around his neck in such a manner that her elbow was bared. This, apparently, was tantamount to nudity in Japan. A national billiard association voiced hot protest because poolrooms, in the movies, are shown as unkempt places where disreputable characters congregate. The late Polish Government barred *Show Boat* because the song, "Ol' Man River," was "proletarian propaganda" likely to incite the Polish masses to rebellion. The American Newspaper Guild objected to the prevalence of impolite, intoxicated, or unscrupulous reporters on the screen.

The British regularly censor those movie scenes in which animals so much as *appear* to be suffering, even though Hollywood's studios offer affidavits from humane societies proving that the effects were achieved quite without pain to our Darwinian cousins. The Glass Bottle Blowers Association complained that the movies were giving free advertising to canned beer, and a group in the canning industry insisted that the movies are spreading the gospel of bottle beverages. France (1939) compelled Hollywood to change the villain of *Beau Geste* from a Frenchman to a Russian.

An organization of silver-fox breeders expressed their indignation because in one picture a Negress was seen wearing a silver fox. The Audubon Society voiced a complaint concerning a story which was being considered by a studio, because the plot required that an eagle carry off a child. It is easy to extend this Domesday Book to chilling proportions, but let us end this array of hurt feelings by citing the letter which denounced a movie because it "maligned and burlesqued" the Master Plumbers of America, a group, it was insisted, "which has done more to protect the health and comfort of the American people than any other group or industry."

No matter what the intentions of the movie makers may be, no matter how unconscious they may be of the effects of their product, no matter how reluctant Hollywood may be to manipulate the subtle and persuasive power at its disposal, the movies exert an influence which is vast and profound.<sup>1</sup>

In a world convulsed by catastrophe and change, Hollywood sells the oldest of allegories in its simplest and most consoling outlines: Boy Gets Girl. Those who berate the movies for their enslavement to Boy Meets Girl—Boy Loses Girl—Boy Gets Girl forget that this theme has been sovereign in the novel and the play for several thousand years, and in cultures ranging from the Greek to the Chinese. They forget that the unhappy ending was unpopular even in enlightened Athens. They forget that no less an authority than Aristotle declared that one of the primary functions of the artist is to serve his audience, that the only art of political importance is popular art: "The poet is guided in what he writes by the wishes of his audience."<sup>2</sup> They forget that T. S. Eliot, surely no apostle of the fleshpots, observed that the movies have supplanted the stage in serving the public with melodrama and concluded that "melodrama is perennial and . . . the craving for it is perennial and must be satisfied."<sup>3</sup>

In the recondite naïveté of Hollywood's movies, life is a simple game between love and misunderstanding, between the pure in heart and the other kind. Optimism is basic, romance is of the essence, crises are rarely more than personal. In the movies, problems are solved by mere love, sheer will, or expiatory gestures; that is, by virtue, luck, or divine intercession. In the norms of the silver screen, virtue, luck, and divine intercession are incomparably more important than skill, intelligence, or reality. The Greek dramatists, it will be remembered, lowered an actor-Jove from the top of the stage so he could settle the destiny of the characters whenever the plot became too complicated for the author; Hollywood's *deus ex machina* is nowhere as crude: he resides in the very content of the movies, in the structure and values of the movies themselves.

In the movie story of mankind, the man who writes to Mother, steps aside for his friend, or places his sweetheart's happiness above his carnal desires is pretty sure to end as the ecstatic bridegroom, the president of the company, or the composer whose genius the audiences at Carnegie Hall acclaim by beating their palms into a pulp. The cad who kicks a dog, cheats at cards, betrays a friend, or attempts to seduce a maiden is headed straight for the Big House, death, and eternal perdition beyond. To movie heroes, of course, death is no more than the passport to eternal joy, its occurrence

<sup>1</sup> See *Motion Pictures and Youth*, a series of twelve studies made under the auspices of the Payne Fund, for which W. W. Charters was chairman. The studies were published in five volumes by Macmillan from 1933 to 1935. See also the penetrating criticism of the methods used, and conclusions drawn, in the above series, by Mortimer J. Adler in *Art and Prudence*, Longmans, Green, 1937, pp. 231-457.

<sup>2</sup> Adler, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

usually being accompanied by a majestic chorus of unseen angels hurling triumphant hosannahs at the audience while the screen swarms with moving clouds. It is surely consoling to discover that, in the special logic of the movies, self-sacrifice always ends in successful (if unplanned) self-aggrandizement; and that selfishness is utter folly, doomed to a terrible fate.

All this means that, in the moral lexicon of Hollywood, honesty is always rewarded, evil is always punished, and crime—in an exquisite reflection of the pragmatic emphases of our world—does not *pay*. The Lord Chief Justice of Great Britain, Lord Hewart, dismissed the contention that the movies help to “make” criminals, in this happy line: “If virtue triumphed in actual life as regularly as on the films, this world might be an easier place both to police and to understand.”<sup>4</sup>

Hollywood’s racial typologies are forever dismaying. To the movie addict, Negroes are lazy, light-hearted mortals who tap dance on the slightest provocation and are prone to burst into spirituals during a thunderstorm. Italians seem to be a singularly specialized species, either childishly happy or dreadfully brutal; their talents, by some anthropological curse, are limited to restauranting or crime. Swedes, of course, are slow-witted behemoths dedicated to either the sea or the basement. In the realm of higher learning, teachers are depicted as frustrated, if female, or emasculated, if male. And the moviegoer knows that a happy woman is one who enters a room with her arms full of packages. An entire social philosophy is reduced to that one classic image.

It is fitting to ask how a generation which has been inoculated with the inclusive romanticism of the movies—a romanticism which encompasses everything from individual amour to social issues—will cope with an increasingly hard and unpretty reality. To those intoxicated by the champagne of the film, everyday life and love may represent the deflation of periodically inflated expectations. One may be excused for wondering what are the consequences to psychological security when clerks are encouraged to believe in high destiny, when buck-toothed ingénues dream of Errol Flynn. True, there were Fairy Princes and Princesses long before celluloid was invented; but were they ever so real, and did they actually talk and kiss and sing?

The emphasis of the films upon action, violence, and brash conduct necessarily involves a devaluation of the thoughtful and the contemplative. This can hardly avoid influencing the manners of a society already predisposed to the physical solution of disputes, the mentality of a society most of whose inhabitants are more respectful of Hugh Johnson than of John Dewey.

This is not meant to imply that Hollywood creates its *own* values, or that Hollywood invents stereotypes with singlehanded omnipotence, or that Hollywood *causes* the public acceptance of banal homilies. The movie makers are in many ways compelled to feed a popular diet to a public which is in firm possession of deplorable tastes—tastes derived from sources far older, deeper, and more potent than Hollywood. The very success of Hollywood

<sup>4</sup> *London Times*, December 15, 1936.

lies in the skill with which it *reflects* the assumptions, the fallacies, and the aspirations of an entire culture. The movie producers, the movie directors, the movie writers, and the movie actors work with the stereotypes which are current in our society—for they, too, are children of that society; they, too, have inherited and absorbed the values of our world. But Hollywood, through the movies, *reinforces* our typologies on an enormous scale and with overpowering repetitiveness. Whether the movies imitate life or whether life imitates the movies is for others to decide; this writer believes that, like missionaries on a desert island, they begin to convert each other. Some critics say that audiences complain about the movies because the movies do not reflect reality; it is this writer's suspicion that more people lament the fact that reality does not reflect the movies.

The long arm of Hollywood can be seen in any home or department store, or by glancing into the nearest mirror. Indirect lighting, modern furniture, and resplendent bathrooms, those landmarks of man's ascent from barbarism, owe much to the silver screen. The off-the-face hat, invented to keep shadows off the faces of movie Lorelei who are paid for their unshadowed features, swept the feminine world in the past decade and re-established a style which is two thousand years old. The movies helped to undermine the taboos which fought off a cosmeticized world. The short-vamp shoe, the decline of the American custom of eating peas with a knife, elegant feminine underthings, the popularity of Scotch and soda, and smoking by adolescents and women—all may be traced in some measure to Hollywood's persuasive power.

The impact of Hollywood on speech, song, and gesture is even more obvious. In Bombay or Oslo or Hong Kong the boys who worship James Cagney, George Raft, or Edward G. Robinson incorporate machine-gun noises and impudent gestures into their play. (In 1939, five thousand police chiefs in the United States voted their annual award to Mr. Cagney as the person who had done most to discourage crime in our land.<sup>5</sup>) The song hits of Shanghai and Dayton are often the same, and Alice Faye or Dorothy Lamour probably introduced them. When Edmund Lowe and Victor McLaglen hurled "Sez you!" at each other as a deadly riposte at regular intervals in one of their film sagas, the phrase became a part of our language for years. The chief constable of Wallasey, a suburb of Liverpool, sadly remarked in one of his annual reports:

I cannot refrain from commenting adversely on the pernicious and growing habit of . . . youths to use the Americanisms, with nasal accompaniment, in order to appear, in their own vernacular, *tough guys*. On one of my officers' going to search him, a young housebreaker told him to "*Lay off, cop.*" *Oh-yeahs* are frequent in answer to charges, and we are promised *shoots up in the burg* [*sic*] and threatened to be *bumped off*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Hollywood Reporter*, July 19, 1939, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, Knopf, 1938, p. 70.

Women have taken an increasingly important place in modern society; in no realm of endeavor has the stronger sex risen to the prominence it occupies in the movie colony and the film industry. No business can match Hollywood's female personnel for influence; there are, indeed, no counterparts to a Shearer or a Colbert. In the index of fame and fortune, the illustrious names of the stage, opera, or letters must yield to the imperial queens of the screen. It should occasion no surprise to learn that when a questionnaire was submitted to girls in one section of New York, asking them what they wanted to be, two-thirds of the lasses replied—movie actress.<sup>7</sup>

The movie idols have usurped the role of Society in establishing styles. Today, Society's fashions are more imitative of Hollywood's than the other way around. Marlene Dietrich's affinity for slacks, for example, was a major factor in the rise of a new article of feminine disguise. The hat which Greta Garbo wore in *Susan Lennox* put thousands of milliners to work on a style which was hailed as revolutionary. Jean Harlow's platinum-dyed hair started a vogue which has not yet, unfortunately, abated. Norma Shearer's bob, for *Romeo and Juliet*, altered women's hair-do for over a year and brought bitter conflict into a million boudoirs. In men's apparel, slack suits, polo shirts, Tyrolean hats, and roll-collar shirts are inescapable evidence of Hollywood's influence. It is a familiar but ever-impressive fact that when Clark Gable disrobed in *It Happened One Night* and was revealed to be *sans* undershirt, he sent the men's underwear business into a decline which, glassy-eyed manufacturers estimated, cut their business from forty to fifty percent within a year.

Hollywood has lured some of the finest designers and couturières in the world into its bailiwick. Movie previews are attended by style copyists who rush their drawings back to the East so that a Crawford gown, mass-produced and cheaply priced, can stream to the women of America with a minimum of delay. There are over fifteen "style-reporting" agencies in Los Angeles which act as style scouts for department stores all over the world; they send out weekly bulletins, sketches, samples, and tips on who is wearing what. Buyers are especially susceptible to Hollywood's styles: it is easier to sell a "number" which has been featured in a film seen by millions of consumers, and sales arguments are fortified by references to the fact that "Ginger Rogers wore this very dress in Palm Springs." Besides, department store buyers like to come to Hollywood: the weather, sports, and the carnival atmosphere make their stay pleasant; and the opportunity of seeing movie stars in the flesh, apart from being exciting in itself, enhances prestige at home to a staff in awe of those who saw the mighty in their habitat. Los Angeles is a booming fashion and clothes manufacturing center; in sportswear it has become almost unrivaled.

We have seen that over twenty years ago English, German, and French merchants began to complain to their governments about the influence of

<sup>7</sup> Caroline F. Ware, *Greenwich Village*, Houghton Mifflin, 1935, p. 350.

Hollywood's movies on their commerce. Audiences which see American typewriters, furniture, automobiles, radios, or clothing in the expertly photographed films of Hollywood show an understandable preference for American merchandise. Any visitor to Europe is impressed by the Americanization of clothes, homes, and habits.

The role of the movies in heightening the public's taste for the perquisites of wealth was even more striking. During the roaring twenties, the American appetite for luxuries spread and deepened: the war years were over, the 1919 depression had been endured, and the glittering, if spurious, prosperity of a decade had begun. Money was god, money-making a cult, spending a glorious adventure. In cars and clothing, houses and services, the pleasure-bent pursued their desires. The interest in etiquette, beauty creams, and democratic snobbery, milestones on the road to Sophistication, was evidenced in the rush for books, magazines, and tutors in the esoteric arts of decorum. Above all, a fast-living, high-riding middle class was possessed by curiosity to know how the rich and the sophisticated live. The movies taught them. *Nouveaux riches* movie makers projected *nouveaux riches* values into the films. Hollywood presented the *nouveaux riche* as a more understandable and sympathetic social type.

It was Cecil B. DeMille who sensed the public demand and, with his own special genius, turned the movies into a medium which satisfied the public's desire for knowledge about the mores of acquisition. He shattered the fashion monopoly of Paris by putting glorified fashion shows on the screen; he gave shop girls ringside seats at dress salons for the price of a movie ticket:

DeMille showed them the object of their dreams in actual use. . . . He knew to a hair the value of over-emphasis and over-elaboration . . . his interiors, exaggerated as they often were, were nevertheless convincing; any one of them might have been in the home of a multi-millionaire, and many of them undoubtedly were after DeMille pointed the way. . . . He withdrew the curtains that had veiled the rich and the fashionable, and exhibited them in all the intimate and lavish details of their private lives.<sup>8</sup>

The DeMille influence has persisted in movies for the simple reason that the lavish is perennially attractive to the populace and perennially profitable to the film companies.

Magazines in a dozen languages feed the fan world which is hungry for a glimpse within the wondrous halls of Hollywood. The Italian movie publication *Film*, after the boycott of American movies by Mussolini and the actual withdrawal of American movies from Italy, was loaded with photographs of Hollywood's godlings. In one issue, page one featured Merle Oberon, Louis Hayward, and Sally Eilers; on page four, there was Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.; part of page five displayed Ann Miller; page seven was occupied by a massive

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin B. Hampton, *A History of the Movies*, New York, Covici-Friede, 1931, p. 222.

photograph of Fred MacMurray; page nine was graced by Lola Lane; and page twelve aimed at posterity with an action shot of Mickey Rooney. More than twice as much space was devoted to Hollywood's stars as to their Italian and European rivals.<sup>9</sup>

Even where there is revolt against Hollywood's dominion, the unconscious aping of Hollywood testifies to the enormity of its influence. *Filmindia*, Bombay's fat fan magazine, conducts a relentless crusade against Hollywood's "disgusting libel of the Indian people . . . disgraceful pictures . . . insidious anti-Indian propaganda. . . ." Only pictures of native stars fill its pages; nary a note or picture of a Hollywood luminary is allowed. And yet, in the same issue in which the quotation cited above occurs (March, 1939), there is a page of photographs in which Indian sirens in American dress cavort in a penthouse(!); one picture shows a lovely Hindu actress using a Flit gun; there is a full page of pictures of native Don Juans in polo shirts, sport jackets, bow ties, felt hats, and ascot scarves (and only one turban); and there is a closeup of a beauteous Hindu maiden with her hat pulled low over her eyes, aiming a gun at the camera in the approved Hollywood mode.

Dr. George Gallup and his American Institute of Public Opinion conducted surveys for two years on the reading habits of Americans in all walks of life and different sections of the land; one of the striking facts "that is scored and underscored in these studies is the tremendous influence of Hollywood on reading tastes." Gallup points out that Hollywood boosts the classics of literature into new and extraordinary popularity. When the movie *David Copperfield* was being publicized, the Cleveland Public Library ordered over 125 extra copies of the book to meet the probable rise in demand; and although the library had over five hundred copies of the book, the shelves were bare of *David Copperfield* and other Dickens novels for weeks. The film *Wuthering Heights* served as a remarkable boomerang to the book's popularity. Four publishing houses sold out all their editions of the work in a short time, and bookstores and public libraries could not cope with the rediscovery of the Brontë masterpiece.<sup>10</sup>

The hand of Hollywood shapes the fiction we read in books and magazines. American writers can scarcely escape being influenced by the brisk structure, tempo, and dialogue of the film; and the golden purse of Hollywood has created a legion of scribes who write with one eye on screen possibilities. Bennett A. Cerf, publishing head of Random House and the Modern Library, recently announced:

... Until a sweeping readjustment takes place . . . in the motion picture world, writers will not be interested enough in either books or book publishers to regard

<sup>9</sup> *Film*, March 23, 1939.

<sup>10</sup> *David Copperfield* item from *New York Times*, Book Section, January 15, 1939, article by George Gallup, "The Favorite Books of Americans." *Wuthering Heights* item is from the *Hollywood Reporter*, April 24, 1939, p. 4.



them as very much more than little way-stations on the royal road to Beverly Hills. . . . How can a sense of proportion be preserved when a lot of worn-out old hacks who haven't written an honest word or thought an honest thought for ten years can still draw a couple of thousand dollars a week turning out scenarios, and newcomers whose first novels are still wet from the presses are offered contracts that make their total earnings from the book rights look like a lunch check at the Automat? . . . The thing that an author wants most from his publisher these days is a letter of introduction to Darryl Zanuck.<sup>11</sup>

The phenomenal rise of Hollywood as a radio center is another manifestation of the film capital's accentuated influence. The radio industry comes to Hollywood for comic, crooning, or histrionic personalities: the size of radio's investment in Los Angeles is exceeded only by its investment in New York, and a University of Southern California study estimates that over fifty percent of the most popular national radio programs originate in Hollywood.<sup>12</sup> The union of movies and radio has deepened and widened the influence of Hollywood.

The Lynds have pointed out, in *Middletown in Transition*, that adolescents not only enjoy the movies, but "go to school" in the movie houses. They model themselves after movie stars; they repeat movie jokes and gestures; they develop surprisingly sophisticated manners; and they pattern their lives not on those of their parents, but on "the sharp figures of the silver screen which present gay and confident designs for living."

All of our institutions, with the important exception of the movies, are cautious about sex and its treatment for adolescents; it is only natural, therefore, that the influence of the movies becomes proportionately greater in this delicate sphere.<sup>13</sup>

In one community in New York City which was studied intensively:

. . . the movies [were] not only the most universal form of recreation, but a major source of ideas about life and the world in general. . . . Movie attendance had become practically universal. . . . The neighborhood movie house was an important feature of the life of the community. . . . The glamour which surrounded the movie and entertainment world . . . was positively dazzling to young people.<sup>14</sup>

Sociologists have commented on the role of the motion picture in reshaping our attitudes to marriage and divorce, our methods of courtship, our reaction to the problems of family life. The movies, with their uniformity of content, bridge the ancient gap between the urban and the rural, and undermine the provincialism of non-metropolitan life. The movies are a source of

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in the *Hollywood Reporter*, January 9, 1941, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> University of California Bureau of Business Research.

<sup>13</sup> Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown in Transition*, Harcourt, Brace, 1937, p. 169.

<sup>14</sup> Ware, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-68.

excitement and substitute experience, a potent agency of non-formal education, a dramaturgic genie who stimulates and gratifies fantasy. The movies put vicarious romance in our laps; they set up ideal stereotypes for love and ideal norms of success. To men everywhere the movies are as inexpensive and universal an avenue of escape as our world offers. An advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* sang Hollywood's praises in these lyrical words:

Go to a motion picture . . . and let yourself go. Before you know it you are *living* the story—laughing, loving, hating, struggling, winning! All the adventure, all the romance, all the excitement you lack in your daily life are in—Pictures. They take you completely out of yourself into a wonderful new world. . . . Out of the cage of every-day existence! If only for an afternoon or an evening—escape! <sup>15</sup>

The movies have extended the dimensions of leisure. They have opened new horizons in education. They have created new foci of public attention. The influence of talking pictures produced for a mass market, distributed world wide, and exhibited simultaneously in hundreds of cities and towns, is at once too immense and too subtle for exact appraisal. It seems self-evident that Hollywood represents a challenge to the sovereignty of church, school, and family in the realm of values. The philosopher, the politician, the publicist, or the student may well agree with Mortimer J. Adler when he observes that the movies are "more than any other art the social and political problem of our day."<sup>16</sup>

## WHAT MUSIC MEANS

B. H. Haggin (1944)

PERHAPS you are one of those who have had the experience described to me by a friend who thought it would be nice to subscribe to the Friday afternoon symphony concerts, and who then spent her Friday afternoons thinking her own thoughts while enveloped in sounds that made no sense to her. The experience was puzzling and provoking because poetry and painting had made a great deal of exciting sense to her all her life, and she had supposed she would get as much out of music.

In time she did; and in the process she discovered the truth of a statement made almost three hundred years ago by Thomas Mace, a clerk of Trinity College, Cambridge, who in 1676 published *Musick's Monument; or, a Remembrancer of the Best Practical Musick, both Divine and Civil, that has ever been known to have been in the World*, in which he included this "digression," as he called it: "But this much I do affirm, and shall be ready to

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown*, Harcourt, Brace, 1929, p. 265.

<sup>16</sup> Adler, *op. cit.*

Prove, by Demonstration (to any Person Intelligible) That Musick is as a Language, and has Its Significations, as Words have (if not more strongly), only most people do not understand that Language (perfectly)." To continue in his terms, one has to learn this language to understand anything that is said in it; and one learns it best in the way one learns any other language—by absorbing it for a long period. That was the way my friend had learned the language of poetry, and later of painting; and that, as it happened, was the way she proceeded to learn the language of Mozart, Beethoven, and Debussy: she continued to go to the concerts and to let the sounds swirl around her until one day, instead of thinking her own thoughts, she found herself following the progression of sound and implied meaning in a piece of music.

If you too have come to music rather late and have been left cold and bored by your first experiences of it, don't stop. Persist; and here are a few observations which may be helpful.

A symphony, like a poem or a painting, is a communication. The communication takes place through an organization of sounds in a form; to receive it you must find musical sounds meaningful—must, as Aldous Huxley once put it, be susceptible to the eloquence of form. But you must begin, of course, by hearing the sounds that are meaningful, the form that is eloquent; and here the symphony creates a difficulty which the poem or the painting does not. The poem lies before you on the page; you can read each group of words as slowly and as many times as you please, until the sense of the words, their sound, their rhythm, their images have made their effect on your mind. The painting hangs before you on the wall; you can look at it as long as you need to perceive all the details and their relations to each other and to be affected by them. But the sounds of the symphony movement succeed each other quickly in time; and even the person for whom musical sounds are meaningful, and who has no difficulty in understanding the single phrase of music that she can hear, may have difficulty with the entire movement in which so many details succeed each other so quickly that she misses many of them and hears only a number of unconnected, unrelated fragments.

Where that is your difficulty the remedy is further hearings of the movement, which will enable you to catch more and more of the details that you have missed and to build up an increasingly coherent experience. Even listening to the entire movement straight through each time will do this; but the better method is to listen to a small part—for example, as much as is on one side of a phonograph record, or even half a side—and familiarize yourself with that before you add on another small part and another, until you have the entire movement.

On the other hand, you may be stopped right at the first phrase of the symphony by the fact that even this phrase doesn't mean anything to you. Not that you lack all susceptibility to musical sound as a medium of communication: you have the susceptibility to the musical language of Jerome

Kern and Richard Rodgers but not to that of Mozart and Beethoven. And you may think that the way to help you is to tell you what the phrase of Mozart or Beethoven means.

But someone observed once that art is not superfluous—by which he meant that it communicates something that cannot be communicated in any other way. Thus the particular overtones of sense and feeling from the lines

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past

cannot be conveyed by anything but the particular form of words that the poet used for the purpose; certainly they are not conveyed by a statement of the literal sense of the words: "When in hours of meditation I recall the past." So with the subtle implications of the phrase of Mozart or Beethoven: they are conveyed by that particular arrangement of sounds and by nothing else. What Mozart or Beethoven has to say only he can say for himself; and it is improbable that he would accept the interpretations of some who undertake to speak for him.

The meaningful implications of the phrase are apprehended from the phrase, grasped immediately with the sounds as you hear them. If you don't get them when you hear the phrase, the only thing you can do is listen to it again and keep listening to it at intervals. Kern and Rodgers speak to you in a musical language you have heard all your life; if you hear as much of Mozart and Beethoven, their language may come to mean as much. If, that is, you listen many times to the phrase that communicated nothing to you, one day you may find the sounds suddenly alive with a significance they did not have before; and this may be the opening up of a new world of artistic experience as rich and exciting as that of literature. Of one thing you may be sure: if you don't get the meaning of music by listening to the music, you won't get it by reading a description of it.

Nor will you get it from a description of what was going on in the composer's life and period. It is true that the whole man was involved in the process which produced the lines

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past

and that with the man were involved, more remotely, the events and ideas and tendencies of his period which affected all his functioning. But the result of the process was the lines of poetry and their overtones of sense and feeling; and to know everything involved in the process is not the same thing as to apprehend those overtones from the *result* of the process; nor is it even of any help in apprehending them. So with the phrase of Mozart; and if you do read biographical and historical information about him, read it for its interest as biography and history, not for help in understanding his music.

Moreover, to grasp the meaning of a phrase or to perceive the relation of one phrase to another, it is neither necessary nor helpful to know that the second inversion of the dominant seventh leads to the supertonic—any more than it is necessary or helpful to know that a poem is written in iambic pentameter. Learning to hear the sounds and the way they are related in each phrase, the relation of one phrase to the next in the progression, you will be learning to follow the grammar and logic of musical thought, the operations by which it proceeds; but you can do all this without knowing the technical facts and names of what you are hearing. Concerning the subtle pleasure that is to be had from a certain detail in a work of Mozart, the great English critic Tovey observes: "It depends on a deliberate sense of key, but has nothing to do with the technical knowledge which enables us to name it."

In short: just as the way to understand a poem is to read it, and the way to understand a painting is to look at it, so the way—the only way—for you to understand a piece of music is to listen to it—and to keep listening.

## LETTERS TO THEO

(From Dear Theo)

Vincent van Gogh (1883)

1883, Drenthe. I know the soul's struggle: Am I a painter or not? The struggle is hard sometimes; it creates a difference between us and certain other people who take things less seriously; we feel wretched at times, but each fit of melancholy brings a little light, a little progress; character develops. Those who seek real simplicity are themselves quite simple, and their view of life is full of good-will and courage, even in hard times.

There is a saying by Gustave Doré which I have always admired: '*J'ai la patience d'un bœuf.*' I find in it a certain virtue, a certain resolute honesty. It is the word of a real artist. Ought one not to learn patience from nature, learn patience from seeing the corn slowly ripen, seeing things grow? Should one think oneself so absolutely dead as to imagine one will grow no more? Should one deliberately thwart one's own development?

1883, Neunen. When I call myself a peasant-painter, that is a real fact, and it will become clearer and clearer to you in the future. I feel at home in the country, and it has not been in vain that I spent so many evenings with the miners, and peat diggers, and weavers, and peasants, musing by the fire—unless I was too hard at work for musing. By witnessing peasant life continually, at all hours of the day, I have become so absorbed in it that I hardly ever think of anything else. In fact, I have no other wish than to live deep, deep in the heart of the country, and to paint rural life. I feel that my work lies there, so I shall keep my hand to the plough and cut my furrow steadily.

This week I started a composition of peasants around a dish of potatoes in the evening. I just came home from this cottage, and have been working at it by lamplight. I have been on it for three days continually, from morning till night; Saturday night the paint got into a condition which forbade all further work until it had become quite dry.

I made this sketch on a rather large canvas. I am sure C. M. would find fault with the drawing. Do you know what is a positive argument against that? That the beautiful effects of light in nature demand a very quick hand in drawing. I know quite well that the great masters knew both how to elaborate in the finishing and how at the same time to keep a subject full of life. But that is certainly beyond my power for the present. As far as I have got now, however, I see a chance of giving a true impression of what I see; not always literally exact, rather never exact, for one sees nature through one's own temperament. And what I am trying to acquire is not to draw a *hand*, but the *gesture*: not with mathematical correctness a head, but the *expression*—for example, when a digger looks up and sniffs the wind or speaks. In short, *life*.

Of the sketch of the potato-eaters I painted in the cottage I should like to make, with a few alterations, a definite picture. This may prove to be one which Portier could show, or which we could send to an exhibition. I was very glad to hear Portier's opinion of my work; that he found "personality" in it. I try more and more to be myself, caring relatively little whether people approve or disapprove. I don't mean to say that I should not care if Mr. Portier stuck to his good opinion; on the contrary, I shall try to make things which strengthen him in it.

I have now made a lithograph of this sketch of the potato-eaters. Please give Mr. Portier as many copies as he wants. It is different from lamplights by Dou or van Schendel; it is perhaps not superfluous to point out to him how one of the most beautiful things of the painters of this country has been the painting of *black* which has *light* in it.

The 'Potato-Eaters' is at least a subject which I have felt. I could point out its weak points, and some outright errors; but there is certain life in it, perhaps more than in some pictures that are absolutely faultless.

In order to paint rural life one must be master of so many things. On the other hand, I don't know anything at which one works with so much calm, in the sense of serenity, however much struggle one may have in material things. I mean painting is a *home*; one does not feel homesickness, and I was sick of the boredom of civilization. One is happier—one feels that at least one is really alive.

I have tried to make it clear how these people, eating their potatoes under the lamplight, have dug the earth with those very hands they put in the dish;

and so the painting speaks of manual labour, and how they have honestly earned their food. I wanted to give the impression of quite a different way of living than that of us civilized people. Therefore I am not at all anxious for everyone to like it or to admire it at once.

All winter long I have had in hand the threads of this fabric, and have searched for a definite pattern; and though it has taken on a rough, coarse aspect, nevertheless the threads have been selected carefully and according to certain rules. And it may prove to be a real *peasant picture*. *I know it is.*

But he who prefers to see the peasants in their Sunday best may do as he likes. I for my part am convinced that I get better results by painting them in their roughness than by giving them a conventional charm. I think a peasant girl is beautiful in her dusty and patched blue petticoat and bodice, which gets the most delicate hues from weather, wind, and sun. But if she puts on a lady's dress she loses her typical charm. A peasant in his fustian clothes in the fields is more typical than when he goes to church on Sunday in a kind of dress coat.

In the same way it would be wrong, I think, to give a peasant picture a certain conventional smoothness. If a peasant picture smells of bacon smoke, potato steam, all right, that's not unhealthy; if a stable smells of dung, that belongs to a stable; if the field has an odour of ripe corn or potatoes, or of guano or manure, that's healthy, especially for people from the city. Such pictures may *teach* them something. To paint peasant life is a serious thing, and I should reproach myself if I did not try to make pictures which raise serious thoughts in those who think seriously about art and about life. I see in the 'Salon' number so many pictures which as to technique are faultlessly drawn and painted, if you like, yet bore me terribly because they give me food neither for the heart nor for the mind.

The last days are almost dangerous for a picture, as you know, because when it is not quite dry one cannot work in it with a large brush without the great chance of spoiling it. And the alterations must be made quietly and calmly with a small brush. Therefore I have simply taken it to a friend of mine at Eindhoven and told him to take care that I should not spoil it in that way, and after three days or so I shall go and wash it there with the white of an egg and give it those finishing touches. The man had seen the study from which I had made the lithograph, and said he had not thought I could have carried the drawing and colour at the same time to such a pitch.

It is very dark, and in the white hardly any white has been used, but simply the neutral colour. That colour in itself is a pretty dark grey, but in the picture it seems white. I will tell you why I have it so.

Here the subject is a grey interior, lit up by a little lamp. The dirty linen tablecloth, the smoky wall, the dirty caps in which the women have worked in the field, all this *when seen through the eyelashes* in the light of the lamp proves to be very dark grey, and the lamp, though a yellow reddish blaze, is lighter still, even much lighter, than the white in question.

As to the flesh colours, I know quite well that considered superficially they seem what is called flesh colour. At first in the picture I tried to paint them so with yellow ochre, red ochre, and white. But that was ever so much too light and was decidedly wrong. What was to be done? All the heads were finished, and even finished with great care, but I repainted them straightaway, unmercifully, and the colour in which they are painted now is like *the colour of a good dusty potato, unpeeled*.

I have painted this *from memory on the picture itself*. In the picture I give free scope to my own head in the sense of *thought* or imagination, which is not the case in studies where no creative process is allowed, but where one finds food for one's imagination in reality, in order to make it exact. This is the second time that a saying by Delacroix has meant much to me: the first time it was his theory about colours; now it is his theory about the *creation* of a picture. He pretended that the best pictures are made from memory. '*Par coeur*!' he said. But how many times I have painted the heads! And then I ran over every night to hit off some details on the spot.

I have now taken the painting back to the cottage to give it some last touches from nature. I think it is finished—always spoken comparatively, for in reality I shall never think of my own work as finished.

I wonder whether you will find in this picture something to please you. I hope so. I think you will see from it that I have my own way of looking at things, but that there is some conformity with others, certain Belgians. And so, though painted in a different style, in another century than the old Dutch masters, Ostade, for instance, it comes also from the heart of the peasant's life, and is original.

I highly appreciate Portier's saying that he did not retract anything from what he said; nor do I mind that it came out that he had not hung those first studies. But if I send a picture for him, he can only get it on condition that he will show it. As to Durand Ruel, though he did not think the drawings worth-while, do show him this picture; he may sneer at it, but show it to him nevertheless, so that he may see there is some energy in our work. You will hear: '*Quelle croûte!*' You may be sure of that; so am I. Yet we must continue to give something *typical* and *honest*.

The 'Potato-Eaters' is a picture that shows well in gold, but it would show equally well on a wall papered in the deep colour of ripe corn. Against a dark background it shows poorly, and not at all against a dull background. This is because it gives a glance into a very grey interior. In reality it also stands, as it were, in a gold frame, because towards the actual spectator there are the hearth and the glow of the fire on the white walls, which now stand outside the picture, but in reality throw the whole thing back. This coupling it to a gold tone gives, at the same time, a brightness to spots where you would not expect it, and takes away the mottled aspect it gets when un-luckily put against a dull or black background. The shadows are painted in blue, and a gold colour stimulates this.



I have been so absorbed in the picture that I literally forgot my moving, which has to be looked to, after all.

I dare maintain that in connection with later pictures, the 'Potato-Eaters' will keep its value, and that you will see from it that I can do better. I have loved to make it, and I have worked at it with a certain animation. It has not bored me; perhaps for that reason it will not bore others. Because I believe this, I send it to you.

## VENI, VIDI, VICKY:

HELEN HAYES

*Margaret Harriman (1944)*

PEOPLE who want to describe a woman of the theater who is exceptionally pleasant and agreeable in private life often use the somewhat curious phrase "You'd never know she was an actress." By this they mean, presumably, that she is genuine, unaffected, and lacking in the languors and the fancy frame of mind displayed by some of the showier stars. No comment has ever pursued an actress more regularly or with more reason than this one has come to haunt Helen Hayes. It depresses her a little because she has heard so many people, waiting around the stage door or seeing her for the first time at parties murmur, "Is *that* Helen Hayes?" with what seems to her to be disappointment, and she suspects them of adding offhandedly that you would never know she was an actress. During a performance of *Victoria Regina*, one of her most famous roles, an old gentleman in the audience unconsciously gave her an inverted version of "Is *that* Helen Hayes?" that shook her. In her startling makeup as the aged Queen, Miss Hayes was well into her scene with John Brown at Balmoral Castle when this old man, who had been moving uneasily in his seat in the fourth row, nudged his companion and, pointing to the stage, demanded in tones clearly audible across the footlights, "Who is that woman?" The lady who was with him whispered something, apparently telling him that it was Helen Hayes, and the old man raised his voice to a note of indignant disbelief. "Nonsense!" he said loudly, and during the rest of the Balmoral scene he kept shifting around in his seat, shuffling his feet, and muttering "Nonsense!" thunderously at intervals. He must have left, Miss Hayes thinks, before she was trundled on in a wheel chair for the Diamond Jubilee, or else that spectacle threw him into a paralyzed silence; at any rate, he was not heard from then on. It bothers her sometimes to reflect that, whether she appears as herself in a sweater and skirt or as an aged queen in a jet bonnet, she is always met by incredulous exclamations from people who expect her to look different.

Off the stage, Helen Hayes is small, humorous, quiet, and attractive as a rather thin, pleasant child might be attractive. She is not strikingly beautiful,

and actors who have worked with her believe that this has something to do with her being a good actress. "Take Ina Claire," they say. "She's wonderful, all hair and figure and personality, but she's always Ina Claire. Lynn Fontanne the same way. Helen has no glamour—her face is just a face that reflects things—but how she can *give* a character!" In this statement, the word "give" is accompanied by a clenching and curving of the hand and a sharp jerk upward. In her personal contacts, Miss Hayes is, unlike most actresses, a good listener, with the flattering habit of paying attention to each word that is said to her as though it might be the last she would ever hear, and she carries this quality with her onto the stage. Bit players in the cast of *Victoria Regina* who had perhaps one sentence to address to the Queen will tell you that she turned as eagerly to listen to it on the nine-hundred-and-sixty-ninth, and last, performance as she had done on the opening night. This was not as spontaneous as it sounds; she did it deliberately, to keep a tired company on its toes, as the conductor of an orchestra pulls music from his men by an intent glance at the right moment. Of the last weeks of *Victoria Regina* Miss Hayes says now, "I felt as though I were playing it under water."

The physical fatigue of playing *Victoria* began to affect her when the play had run for almost two hundred performances, and it was praise from a colleague that almost defeated her then. She had asked Gilbert Miller, the producer of the play, to lunch with her at the Algonquin for the purpose of pleading with him to close the show in May for a couple of months so as to give her a little rest, and she had, by a colorful account of her own exhaustion, brought him almost to the point of consenting, when Glenn Anders, the actor, came over to the table and, after placing a reverent kiss upon the Hayes brow, addressed Miller intensely. "God bless this great little trouper!" he said. "Do you know what she said to me when I went to see her backstage? She said, 'Glenn, I love this play so much I never get tired acting it. I could willingly go on playing *Victoria* as long as anybody wants to come and see it.' " Here Anders gazed emotionally at Miss Hayes, and Miller gazed emotionally at Anders. "Thank you, Glenn," he murmured, "thank you very, very much indeed." Miss Hayes' comment was briefer; she stared at Anders and said simply, "You louse."

Although she now freely accuses Anders of prolonging the New York run by a couple of weeks, *Victoria Regina* did lay off in June 1936. It reopened the following August, and when it finally closed in Pittsburgh in January 1939, it had played one hundred and twenty-three weeks in New York and on a coast-to-coast tour of forty-five cities, doing a gross business of over three million dollars. In all but two of the cities included in the tour, the play broke the local box-office record—a record which, in every city, had been held by Miss Hayes' earlier tour in *Mary of Scotland*. Broadway columnists, who like the heady feeling of being able to bestow titles on people, have been busy trying to decide whether Helen Hayes or Katharine

Cornell is actually the First Lady of the American Theater. Whatever the chatter-writers finally conclude—and neither actress feels more than a mild interest in the controversy—it is undeniable that both Miss Hayes and Miss Cornell have tremendous drawing power on the road and that they have done more than anyone else in recent years to keep the theater alive throughout the country.

As Victoria, Miss Hayes succeeded in cutting down the time required for the makeup change that transformed her into the aged Queen from twenty minutes on opening night in New York to eight minutes in the final months of the run. Her fingers came to be so tired from applying the difficult makeup that they ached regularly every Saturday night, but this physical discomfort was less disturbing than the mental blankness brought upon her by almost three years of having people ask her what she put in her cheeks to puff them out like Queen Victoria's. To one interviewer in the Middle West who posed this question, Helen was goaded into replying, "Oh, nuts!" It seems to her just a further example of the barrenness of the whole topic that the reporter hurried back to his paper and disclosed to a startled public that Helen Hayes puts nuts in her cheeks so as to look like the late Queen.

"The only person I can remember who came back to see me and didn't ask me what I put in my cheeks," she says, "was Toscanini. I guess he just didn't care." It was no false sense of theatrics that kept her from revealing how she had copied Victoria's facial contours, nor was it any command of the publicity department, although everybody concerned realized that the mystery made fine publicity. Miss Hayes felt simply that the audience should be more concerned with Victoria as she was able to portray her than with the tricks by which she did it. She had, too, an obscure fear that if the truth were printed about her facial buildup, audiences might concentrate on it unhealthily, as people sometimes stare at a cross-eyed man without wanting to, and—worse than that—might fall to airing their knowledge during a performance.

The truth is that sometimes she used one thing, sometimes another. First she had her dentist make two gutta-percha supports to be slipped inside her cheeks; she was obliged to discard them after a few performances because they pressed so hard against her gums that they made her mouth sore. Charles Laughton then suggested half an apple in each cheek and Miss Hayes tried that for a while, but the apple, though tasty, softened up too quickly and she found herself inadvertently swallowing her disguise. She thought up the final solution herself, and for the rest of the run she used two wads of absorbent cotton moistened with a liquid antiseptic. Nothing as simple as cotton occurred to her audiences, and nothing kept them from wondering audibly how she managed to look like Victoria.

During her scenes as Queen Victoria in her dotage, Miss Hayes heard everything from "It's peach pits," which, from an obscure row in the

orchestra, sounds like hissing, to "It's half an apple," which, slowly spoken, is apt to sound like a well-considered yawn. One audience gave her a genuine inspiration for the role of Victoria. The play required the Queen in her last years to laugh often, chiefly at the philosophic wisecracks of John Brown, and Miss Hayes was obliged to create, or imitate, an old woman's laugh. She knew that most old women laugh cagerly but with physical difficulty, that laughter in the very old is a strong surge of merriment in a body too frail to express it. On opening night she was still dissatisfied with the way Victoria laughed when she was seventy. The second night, during the scene in which the Queen, as a bride, watches her husband shaving, she happened to look across the footlights and saw an old lady having a fine time in the first row. Her laughter came in short, hard chuckles from the deep folds of her black silk, and after each spasm she gasped, wiped her eyes with her handkerchief, and settled back in her seat, sighing pleasantly. From that time Victoria's laugh was the laugh of the ancient playgoer in Row A.

Miss Hayes' own laughter is a fine thing to hear. She laughs easily, throwing her head back and letting the sound of her amusement run out of her like water from a tap, and she has a devious and unexpected humor. She laughs at gags such as the one about the man who had claustrophobia so bad that he couldn't wear a double-breasted suit, and she is agreeable, if less uproarious, when confronted with the wit of her husband, Charles MacArthur. MacArthur is the playwright and scenarist who is also prominent as a merry-andrew, and his sense of comedy is more robust than his wife's. One New Year's Eve in Philadelphia an audience stirred by the final scene of *Victoria Regina*, in which the feeble Queen welcomes her family and subjects to her Diamond Jubilee, was abruptly jerked from its mood of reverence when Victoria, at the second curtain call, pulled a red tin horn from the wrappings of her wheel chair and blew a gaudy blast on it. Later someone asked Miss Hayes what had prompted her to do it. "Charlie thought it would be funny," she explained.

Helen Hayes was not born with the high aspirations and devotion to a calling that begin to make some geniuses uncomfortable early in life. Her family background was only dimly theatrical. A great-great-aunt, Catherine Hayes, was a singer, known professionally as the Erin Swan, who had sung Irish ballads for the Forty-Niners in lumber camps and mining towns in the West. Helen's mother, whose maiden name was also Catherine Hayes, had spent one dizzy week in her own youth as the feminine lead in a stock-company production of *Damon and Pythias* in her home town, Washington, D. C. She had abandoned the theater after that flourish partly because of incurable stage fright and partly because of the melancholy discovery that the quality in her which her fellow-actors and the company director seemed to admire above her acting talent was the fact that she could sit on her hair. She married Francis V. Brown, who was manager of road salesmen for the N. Auth Provision Co., a wholesale butcher concern in Washington that

dealt principally in pork products. After Helen was born, Mrs. Brown sought to inspire her daughter with her own love of the theater, and as Helen grew older, Mr. Brown would often come home from a comfortable atmosphere of spareribs and pork chops to find his wife classically parading the living room, intoning mellow passages from the poets with appropriate gestures, while Helen drifted along behind, dutifully imitating her. To people who ask Mrs. Brown nowadays whether she hoped that her daughter would grow up to be a great actress, she replies simply, "Doesn't everybody?" She qualifies this by saying that she never explicitly planned a stage career for Helen, but that as soon as she realized her daughter was a born actress, she encouraged her talent in every possible way. This is what most mothers of actresses say, and it is a reasonable statement once you have conceded to actresses' mothers the ability to recognize a born actress at sight.

Helen's childish antics, which her mother now likes to recall, seem little more than the usual doings of an intelligent child, but Mrs. Brown had the gift, strong in all mothers whose daughters eventually become actresses, of seeing only the dramatic and the unique qualities in her daughter and of taking care that the right people saw them as well. The showmanship displayed by a woman with a child she believes to be talented is something that almost any professional impresario can only envy. She knows instinctively how to invade managers' offices with bared fangs or with a pantherlike glide, according to the situation—and instinct tells her, too, that the child must always be pushed ahead of her, never pulled along behind. Fathers have little to do with these preliminaries. Perhaps they never sharply visualize their daughters as grown-up and famous, or it may be that they are too busy making a living for the family to do much dreaming about the future. Whatever the reason, most fathers of successful actresses seem to have lost touch with their daughters at an early date. Mothers, on the other hand, are women, as a songwriter once insisted, and another cynic has said that all women are actresses whether they work on the stage or off. Possibly it is a love of vicarious drama that keeps an actress's mother always with her, hand in glove and sometimes tooth and nail.

Mrs. Brown's approach to a career for Helen was unusually peaceful. When Helen was six, her dancing class gave a recital; Mrs. Brown rushed around in a fury buying false curls and materials for a costume, spent hours teaching her daughter the then celebrated Gibson Girl walk, and Helen's impersonation of Annabelle Whitford, the Ziegfeld Gibson Girl of that period (around 1907), was the hit of the show. A guest in the audience that day, possibly scouting for talent, was Lew Fields, of Weber and Fields, who were then playing Washington. Mr. Fields sent a note to the head of the dancing school saying that if Helen Hayes Brown's mother should ever consider a stage career for her daughter, he would like to see her about it. Mrs. Brown thought the note gracious, but Helen's success that afternoon had naturally started her mother's mind working on a career for her daughter

similar to Bernhardt's or Modjeska's, and the idea of Weber and Fields was a comedown. She dismissed it and accepted instead an offer that presently came from the Columbia Players, a Washington stock company which more nearly approached her notion of art in the theater. Next year, with the Columbia Players, Helen appeared in *The Prince Chap* and as Little Lord Fauntleroy. In both productions she knew everybody's part as thoroughly as her own and enjoyed prompting any member of the cast who so much as hesitated, in a voice that was clearly heard as far as the tenth row of the orchestra. She also displayed a gift for ad-libbing that was sometimes enough to frighten adult actors. One scene in *Little Lord Fauntleroy* required Fauntleroy to pull a red bandanna from his pocket and show it to his grandfather, the old Earl, and most of the dialogue depended on this gesture. At one performance the property man forgot to put the bandanna in the pocket, and when Helen reached for it, it was not there. "Well," she said distinctly, and without a perceptible pause, "I must have left it in my room. I'll just go and get it." And she strolled off the stage, leaving the old Earl in a spot that would make any actor shudder. Inspirations like this convinced Helen's mother that her child was truly destined to be a star, and before Helen was eight, Mrs. Brown had persuaded her husband to advance living expenses for herself and her daughter in New York. Mr. Brown was bewildered by the giddy turn affairs were taking, but he was helpless before the invasion of art into his home. He agreed to supply thirty-five dollars a week for a limited number of weeks.

In New York, Mrs. Brown remembered the offer from Lew Fields, but what she wanted for Helen was still something grander than association with a couple of Dutch comedians. She loftily kept Helen away from the Weber & Fields office, somewhat in the frame of mind of a man who holds the Koh-i-noor in his hand passing a hockshop, and when the financial time limit was up before she had found Helen a job, she sadly bought railroad tickets home to Washington on a train leaving the next day. That night, in the rooming house where they were living, a fellow-boarder to whom Mrs. Brown had lightly mentioned Field's interest in Helen said, "You're crazy not to see Fields before you go. Suppose you don't want musical comedy for Helen. Fields has the Shuberts in the hollow of his hand, and the Shuberts produce plays." The next morning Mrs. Brown, a little nervous about train time, called at the Weber & Fields office with Helen. She was kept waiting in an anteroom while Fields escorted one highly scented beauty after another from his private office to the elevator, turning upon Helen and her mother each time a stare of blank unrecognition. When the door of the private office opened for the fifth time and Lotta Faust, a famous theatrical siren of that day, breezed out on Field's arm, Mrs. Brown took Helen's hand and got up to go. In the corridor, where Fields had tenderly placed La Faust in a descending elevator, Mrs. Brown, with a last weary gesture, pushed Helen around so that she stood about eye to eye with his

lowest waistcoat button. "Do you remember this child, the one who impersonated Annabelle Whitford in Washington?" she said rapidly. Fields stared and beamed. "Come right in!" he said.

Helen and her mother took the train for Washington that day, but it was only to carry the tidings to Helen's father that Helen had been given a contract at fifty dollars a week to play the part of Mime, a little Dutch girl, in the Weber & Fields production of *Old Dutch*, and that rehearsals were to start almost immediately. Mrs. Brown and her daughter never went back to Washington to live. Helen played a full season in *Old Dutch* and remained with Weber & Fields three years longer, until she was twelve. Long before that, Mr. Brown had retired into the obscurity that waits for actresses' fathers, and his disappearance was punctuated by his wife's decision to drop the "Brown" from Helen's name. Mrs. Brown lives now in an attractive apartment full of canaries on East End Avenue in New York; she is a small, gay woman, known as Brownie to Miss Hayes' friends, and her voice and mannerisms are startlingly like her daughter's. Mr. Brown retired from the meat business some years ago and lives comfortably in a house Helen bought for him on Chesapeake Bay. He goes to Washington when Helen opens there in a new play, and once in a while he is one of the invited guests at parties given for his daughter. At these fetes, he is a medium-sized, unobtrusive figure, listening quietly while the other guests rave about Helen Hayes. Mr. Brown has never found a graceful way of telling them who he is. From the time Helen was eight, she and her mother tramped hardily through most of the United States, including some in the Far West which were still considerably wild and primitive. In 1917 Helen played *Pollyanna* in a little Western town to an audience that consisted chiefly of cowhands from neighboring ranches. All of them carried guns and wore spurs, and they were men who liked to express themselves simply, but Helen was not prepared for the candor with which they greeted the play. In one scene, *Pollyanna*, the Glad Girl, was carried onto the stage with both legs broken after she had been run over by a heedless motorist, and she then flung her arms out to the audience and cried, "I'm so glad, glad, *glad* it happened! For after all you have to *lose* your legs to *really love* them!" At this point, every performance, the cowhands would break down and sob like little children.

As other children are kept from the lowdown on Santa Claus and the stork, Helen, in her youth, was protected by her mother from the facts about dramatic critics. When she was thirteen and her opening performance with John Drew in *The Prodigal Husband* inspired praise in the papers next day, Mr. Drew called to Helen from his dressing room on the second night as she and her mother were passing the door and began to compliment her on the reviews. Mrs. Brown marched into the dressing room and slammed the door behind her, shutting Helen out in the hall. "My daughter," she told Mr. Drew fiercely, "does not know that dramatic critics exist." Whether or not

Helen had any suspicions on the subject, it was not until she was eighteen and made her first big hit, in *Dear Brutus* with William Gillette, that Mrs. Brown took all the papers into her daughter's room next morning and turned them over to her without a word. It required a national calamity to bring about Helen's success in *Dear Brutus*. She was playing in Booth Tarkington's *Penrod*, under the management of George Tyler, when a telegram from the Charles Frohman office offered her the role of the daughter in *Dear Brutus* opposite Gillette. Tyler refused to release Helen from *Penrod*, and Mrs. Brown likes to relate what happened to Mr. Tyler then. "The hand of God," she says, "sent an epidemic of influenza to New York and the Board of Health closed every theater that children were likely to attend." *Penrod* shut down, and Tyler's misfortune set Helen free to act with Gillette under Frohman management, which was a step up.

Helen returned to Tyler the following year, 1919, to appear in *Clarence* with Alfred Lunt, and in the next five years, under various managements, became established as an ingénue in such plays as *Bab*, a *Sub-Deb*, based on the stories by Mary Roberts Rinehart; *To the Ladies*, by George Kaufman and Marc Connelly; *We Moderns*, by Israel Zangwill, and *Dancing Mothers*, an Edgar Selwyn play.

In the summer of 1925 Helen and her mother rented a house at Syosset. Two other actresses came to spend the summer with her; one was June Walker, who was then about to go into rehearsals for the Theatre Guild production of *The Glass Slipper*, and was considerably more important in the theater than Helen; the other was Halcyon Hargreaves, a schoolmate of Helen's in the days when she had intermittently attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Washington. Helen bought an automobile and is still remembered around Syosset as one of the most remarkable drivers ever to frequent those parts; she was all right as long as she could go ahead, but when she had to stop or back up, she stripped the gears every time. On the rare occasions when she drives a car these days her conduct behind a steering wheel continues to be interesting, consisting mainly of warnings wildly shrieked to pedestrians and motorists to get out of the way if they know what's good for them. Among the lighthearted incidents of the Syosset summer was the casualty to June Walker, who sat on a bee; Helen drove her violently all over the county looking for a middle-aged doctor, since June had forcefully declared that she was not going to let any young man treat her for this wound. They finally found a gray-bearded physician, who took the case in his stride.

Attracted by the glamour of the theater that hung over the Hayes house, the beaux of the neighborhood came courting in droves, and few were more arresting than one Colonel Lloyd C. Griscom, who had been United States Ambassador to Italy and to Brazil and who further spoke of himself in conversation as a writer, a painter, a playwright, and a soldier. As a distinguished man of affairs who owned a yacht, Colonel Griscom was encouraged by



Mrs. Brown to visit the house, and he fascinated the girls, chiefly because he had a way of persuading them to pose for his water-color sketches until they dropped from exhaustion, upon which crisis he would take them out to recuperate aboard his yacht and keep them out until they got seasick. Griscom, a widower with children, was also a Quaker, and it was his young son who made a thoughtful remark the first time he saw the yacht. He said it didn't seem to be big enough. "Where is thee going to put all the actresses?" he inquired of his father.

In spite of her professional success and the attentions of Syosset swains, Helen Hayes remained socially detached, silent in the presence of strangers, and worried about her own simplicity of appearance. Her mental unease was the worse that summer because she was, for the first time, painfully concerned with being attractive to a certain man. In the spring she had gone to a cocktail party in New York at the studio of Neysa McMein, whom she had come to know slightly. Miss McMein was the tawny artist and illustrator whose love of celebrities made her salon one of the dizziest phenomena of all the mad twenties, and Miss Hayes, who knew almost no one there, sat uncomfortably in a corner while quips were tossed around like confetti.

One of the guests that day was Charles MacArthur, a Chicago newspaperman who had come to live in New York and who was temporarily serving literature by turning out highly improbable articles for Hearst's *American Weekly*. MacArthur wandered over to Miss Hayes and offered her some peanuts out of a paper bag. She thanked him and took a handful, and MacArthur then made the remark that has since become a shining goal for romantic young men to aim at. "I wish they were emeralds," he said. MacArthur now wishes that he could hear the last of this crack and says rather peevishly that he never suspected Helen was the type who would go around repeating it. His objection to it is that it has a whimsical charm, and his reputation for whimsical charm is one of the things that he is fighting against these days, now that he is an Army major stationed in Washington. His gallantry at the McMein party struck Miss Hayes starry-eyed, though, and soon MacArthur became a frequent weekend guest at the house in Syosset, generally arriving without a toothbrush or pajamas but full of winning ways which plainly failed to fascinate Mrs. Brown. Not only was Charlie a newspaperman, she pointed out to her daughter, and so presumably irresponsible, but he already had a wife. His wife was one Carol Frink, a motion-picture critic on a Chicago newspaper, from whom he was separated but not divorced. To Helen, however, who had worked hard all her life, MacArthur's easy charm and his casual way of doing things that attracted attention were irresistible.

In 1925, when she opened in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Charlie missed the first night but promised to drop around soon and catch the show. Every night after that Miss Hayes would hurry out onto the stage before the performance began and look through the peephole in the curtain to see if he was there. One night Helen Westley, who was in the cast, asked her what she

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was looking for and Miss Hayes said that she was looking for the man she loved, who had promised to come to the play. "Call him up and tell him to come," advised Miss Westley briskly. "Oh, I couldn't do that!" Miss Hayes protested. "Why not?" said Miss Westley. "With me, I keep calling them up until they move."

Not long ago Miss Hayes told this story in MacArthur's presence and he glanced at her thoughtfully. "Does my charm still hold for you, dear?" he asked. "Well," said his wife peacefully, "I'm still looking for you most of the time."

Miss Hayes and MacArthur were married in 1928, after a deadly series of obstructions. Two years earlier, in Chicago, Miss Frink had filed a suit for divorce against MacArthur, but shortly after the success of *Lulu Belle*, which he wrote in collaboration with Edward Sheldon, she had dropped the proceedings. Through his lawyers, MacArthur then made a financial arrangement with her, filed a countersuit for divorce, and received his decree. After he began courting Miss Hayes, Miss Frink claimed that the decree had been fraudulently obtained and threatened to get out an injunction preventing his remarrying. In addition to this headache, Helen's mother and some of her friends were still skeptical of MacArthur as a husband, although he had by 1928 earned a solid reputation as a playwright with *Lulu Belle* and *The Front Page*, the last written with Ben Hecht and running successfully at the time of the marriage. Mrs. Brown subsequently became friendly with Charlie and sometimes speaks of him affectionately as "that devil."

Ben Hecht was on Charlie's side in the problem of his marriage to Miss Hayes, and when MacArthur and Miss Hayes decided that the best idea would be to get married quietly before Miss Frink could proceed to any more stirring activities, Hecht told them that Horace Liveright, the publisher, had said that T. R. Smith, his assistant, knew of a former city magistrate who could, with dignity, arrange a marriage without any publicity. On an August day in 1928, MacArthur hired a car and with the late Alexander Woollcott, another ally, as best man, he and Miss Hayes drove to the office of Charles A. Oberwager, a lawyer, where Magistrate Mark Rudich was to marry them. After they had waited some forty minutes in an anteroom, a number of men carrying notebooks, cameras, and flashlights arrived, and Oberwager came out of an inner office, saying, "You may proceed, Mr. Rudich. The press is here." MacArthur then offered to paste Oberwager in the jaw, but was restrained by the reporters, and the marriage took place somewhat tensely. For Helen Hayes, it was a strange wedding to the man who was the trademark for Prince Charming, but she had no time to mourn its lack of romance. She was playing in *Coquette* then, and she had to get back to the theater in time for the evening performance.

From the time of their marriage, Miss Hayes and MacArthur have been pursued by picturesque situations that have resulted in some fairly gruesome publicity. Even their honeymoon, during a ten-day vacation Miss Hayes

managed to get from *Coquette* several weeks after the wedding, was touched with the macabre. On the boat to Bermuda, a friendly couple introduced themselves as Mr. and Mrs. Conway; Conway was one of the editors of *Variety*. Late one night in the Bermuda hotel where the Conways and the MacArthurs were staying, Mrs. Conway knocked frantically on the MacArthurs' door with the hysterical tidings that her husband had just dropped dead. The local authorities insisted on an inquest, at which Helen and Charlie were required to testify, and although the coroner's verdict simply enough stated that heart disease was the cause of death, the inquest occupied most of the wedding trip, and the MacArthurs' sentimental journey ended with bringing Conway's body and his prostrate wife back to New York. MacArthur now refers to this incident the way a scenario writer would refer to a scene in a movie; he calls it "the Death."

The following year, a clash between the cast of *Coquette* and Jed Harris, the producer, struck the front pages with such force that it is still familiar to most people, a good many of whom have the facts wrong. The popular version is that Miss Hayes, who was going to have a baby, claimed through her lawyer that her pregnancy was an act of God and that she could not therefore fulfill her contract with Harris, which called for a six-week tour in *Coquette*. What actually happened was that Miss Hayes, after two weeks of the tour, told Harris that the impending birth of her child would not allow her to finish the tour, and Harris decided to close the show rather than replace its star with another actress. The members of the cast, informed of this plan, claimed that six weeks' salary was due them by right of contract. Before an arbitration board appointed by the Actors' Equity Association, the late Joseph P. Bickerton, junior, Harris's lawyer, quoted the clause in Equity contracts stating that actors are not entitled to salaries "if the company cannot perform because of fire, accident, strikes, riot, act of God," and so on, and argued that the birth of a baby was an act of God. Harris was required by the board to settle with the actors by paying them an extra two weeks' salary, but it was too late to prevent ribald journalists all over the country from hailing the MacArthur child as "the act-of-God baby." Mary MacArthur, who is now fourteen, has grown up without any painful knowledge of the skirmish. She is attractive, blond, and about three inches taller than her mother. She knows that one of Helen Hayes's first parts in the theater was *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and that she was obliged, in the play, to call her mother "Dearest" with a dead pan, but this subject is not often referred to between Mary and her mother except when they discuss the names MacArthur would like to give to the new French poodles he wants to buy. He would like to call them *Fauntleroy* and *Dearest*. Mary calls her mother Mommy, and so does the MacArthurs' seven-year-old son Jamie, an endearing child who has a way of appearing out of a lilac bush when you least expect to see him. "Jamie is like some woodland thing," Miss Hayes remarked, one day when he turned up silently at her side as she was passing a hedge. The fifth member of the Mac-

Arthur family is Charles, a seven-year-old English boy, who is living with them for the duration.

Miss Hayes's latest, and worst, bout with the press occurred about ten years ago when Carol Frink, MacArthur's former wife, from whom he had been divorced in 1926, sued her for one hundred thousand dollars on the ground that Miss Hayes had alienated MacArthur's affections while he was still married to Miss Frink. Charlie, who by that time was writing for the movies and had enough Hollywood money to withstand almost any affliction, was in favor of settling the case out of court to spare his wife the unpleasantness. Miss Hayes pointed out that Miss Frink was mistaken, and that for the sake of the MacArthur home and Mary MacArthur, the mistake had better be proved in public. For the hearing, which took place in Chicago in 1935, MacArthur flew East from Hollywood, and Miss Hayes went out from New York. With Carol Frink, they made a curious trio in the Chicago courtroom: Miss Frink, full-blown and unafraid, carefully dressed in a new summer ensemble; Helen Hayes, patient and incredulous, in a plain dress and a plain straw hat; and MacArthur, angry and scared, as a man might well be at the prospect of hearing tales of his own devastating behavior in the early 1920's. Letters from Charlie to Carol signed "Charliecum's" and other embarrassing diminutives were read aloud in court. Miss Frink, after describing how gay a companion MacArthur had been when he married her and the romantic circumstance of his proposal to her in the Old Mill at Coney Island, looked across the courtroom at him and pensively remarked to reporters later that Charlie was losing his hair and getting fat. "I wouldn't take him now," she said, "if he came in a box of Cracker Jack." The hearing lasted three days, at the end of which time the court was convinced that MacArthur had been long separated from his wife before he met Miss Hayes, that they had been divorced two years before he and Miss Hayes were married, and that the plaintiff had no case. Miss Frink withdrew the suit on the advice of her lawyers and was ordered to pay court fees amounting to one hundred dollars. Painful as it was for Charlie and Miss Hayes, she is thankful that she had this situation out with Charlie's ex-wife. Miss Frink has made no further comment.

When Miss Hayes is playing in New York, she commutes by car or by bus between the theater and the house she and her husband bought eleven years ago in Nyack. Set back slightly from the street, with grounds in the rear sloping down to a swimming pool and to the river beyond, the house is Victorian in style and decoration; artificial flowers under glass stand on the fireplace mantels, crystal chandeliers are reflected in wide gilt-framed mirrors, and on a small table in the living room a plaster cast of Helen's hands holds an old-fashioned nosegay of real flowers in a paper frill. The décor was not inspired by *Victoria Regina*; Miss Hayes has always liked the Victorian period and she furnished her house in that style two years before she had heard of Housman's play. In the basement beneath this elegance, the bar, Mac-

Arthur's domain, lurks like some carefully planned hell. Obscurely lighted and approached by a winding staircase, this apartment has wall benches covered in the MacArthur tartan, a dour arrangement in two shades of dark green. A couple of standing lamps with red glass-domed shades illuminate a photograph of the late King Edward VII (unautographed, MacArthur will proudly point out) and a poster advertising the unparalleled feat of Blondin, who "will walk backwards on a rope over Niagara, heavily chained with his feet in large baskets." On the mantel there is a clock with chimes, waterfall, and bird's nest containing a father and a mother bird peering stonily at their little one, which has fallen out of the nest into the torrent below. A shooting gallery behind the bar is not yet completed, owing to a difference of opinion between the MacArthurs. The idea is that you stand across the room, aim, and fire, being careful not to break any bottles, and MacArthur thought it would be a fine jest to line up likenesses of well-known dramatic critics to shoot at. Miss Hayes protested that critics had always been very nice to *her*, and MacArthur has now reconciled himself to a quieter notion. He plans a jungle scene, with a large ape prowling slowly back and forth as the target. Radio music in this den comes from behind a vast canvas of a reclining nude hung on one wall and flanked by potted palms; at the foot of the staircase stands a statue of a lady eternally transfixed in a diving pose and wearing long marble underwear ribbed and scalloped in a lifelike manner; and in the adjoining bathroom there are all kinds of tricks, of course. MacArthur's attitude toward callers who are introduced to these caprices for the first time is a curious blend of watchfulness and hope, like a man telling a funny story he thinks you may have heard before. He follows the visitor around and waits for the laughs as anxiously as Ed Wynn with a new comical hat. Miss Hayes, to whom it is all pretty familiar, generally sits with one foot under her on the MacArthur tartan and drinks Kalak water.

Even when the Major is home on leave, the MacArthurs rarely go out in Nyack, and they have each found a social excuse that is surefire on the telephone against the most pressing invitations: Helen, who may be feeling in radiant health, simply says that she is sick in bed, and Charlie, speaking in precise and almost offensively sober accents, will explain that as for him he is far too drunk to go anywhere. They have found these statements unanswerable. Helen spends a good deal of time at home knitting complicated garments for Jamie or sometimes just sitting side by side with him and looking into space. She and Jamie are both great ones, she says, for sitting and looking into space. In the evenings, Charlie likes to play old Scotch airs on a silver clarinet he won from Arthur Hopkins on a bet that a play called *Salvation*, by himself and Sidney Howard, would be a failure. His wife finds his tunes mournful, "but then, I am a mournful man," says Charles. In the daytime, Miss Hayes sometimes puts on roller skates and, with Mary, skates down to the village and along the sidewalks, where she attracts little attention from the passers-by. Nyack people are accustomed to colorful neighbors and it takes more

an actress on skates to raise their eyebrows. Beginning with Oom the impotent, who founded his colony of Yoga students there, the local pixies include one mild-mannered woman who patrols the village streets wearing white robes and a crown of gold and pausing at each crossing to blow tily on a gilt trumpet; and another lady, an animal lover, who drives a e and buggy around town on cold days with the horse wearing two pairs ants.

Dressed for the street in Nyack or New York, Miss Hayes looks young casual, rather like the pictures of college girls in rotogravure fashion ions. She is indifferent to fashion, however, and will tell you compla-ly that a dramatic critic once spoke of her as the worst-dressed actress on American stage, and that Elsa Maxwell contradicted him, saying, "It isn't Helen dresses badly; she simply doesn't dress at all." Twice the blandish-its of her husband and friends have got her into Hattie Carnegie's, and solved both crises by pointing to the dress Miss Carnegie was wearing saying, "I'll have that one." One day she came out of the stage entrance r a matinee of *Victoria Regina* wearing a rather shabby fur coat and rd a woman say to the man she was with, "There's Helen Hayes!" The n stared and said, "Looking like that? It couldn't be!" The next day, Miss yes, in a spasm of duty to a public which expects her to look dazzling off stage, called up Jaeckel's and talked to them seriously about a sable coat. e coat, as the Jaeckels dreamed of it, was to cost fifteen thousand dollars, l it seemed to Miss Hayes that such a gesture ought to satisfy almost any- dy. "Besides," she says characteristically now, "I figured that if I had on a teen-thousand-dollar sable coat, I could wear any old sweater and skirt I ed underneath." Leaving the theater that afternoon after the matinee, she ssed the Durand-Ruel Galleries and saw a Renoir in the window priced at ound fifteen thousand dollars. The Renoir now hangs in the house at yack, and the Jaeckels, if they are the emotional kind, are still weeping to their sables.

Except for knowing where she wants to spend it, Helen Hayes is not rewd about money, and her finances are handled by Leland Hayward, who ts as agent for her and for MacArthur. During *Victoria Regina* and her ter engagement in *Harriet*, her salary was sent to Hayward every week ter an amount varying from thirty-five to fifty dollars had been deducted y Harry Essex, the company manager, for weekly expenses, including leenex, cold cream, cigarettes, and other incidentals. The allowance was dvanced bit by bit by Essex with many protests; he says he could never be re that Miss Hayes would not hand it all to some pal with a hard-luck story. he has an honest respect for cash, though, and it pleased her to be able to eat Mr. Essex airily when he came around with the weekly dole one time st fall. "I don't believe I will be needing that pittance," said Miss Hayes oftily. "I have a little money of my own." And she waved in his face a check or three thousand dollars that had been paid directly to her for a radio broad-



cast. Her generosity is not limited to gifts of money. A year or so ago, broadcasting on a program sponsored by a manufacturer of silverware, she received in addition to her regular payment a showy chest of the sponsor's table silver; it drifted around the Nyack house for a week or so until Miss Hayes got the idea of giving it to Ruth Gordon, a good friend of hers, who had just moved into a new apartment. She dispatched it with an affectionate note to Ruth, and was disconcerted to get it right back next day; at least, it looked like the same chest of silver. It turned out that Miss Gordon, appearing on the same radio program a week after Miss Hayes, had been similarly rewarded and had thought it would be nice to give *her* chest of silver to Helen. The two gifts crossed, and between them the girls have more table silver than they care to think about.

In the theater, Miss Hayes works on a straight salary basis and has more than once refused offers of a share in a play's profits. One reason is that she has no desire for money in any larger quantities than she needs to live comfortably, to buy a painting once in a while or a willow tree for the grounds in Nyack, and her salary is enough to take care of that. Another, more poignant, reason is that the more money she makes, the more she has to pay to the government in income tax. The government has, even before the war, annually taken more than one-third of her earnings in the theater alone, and fifty per cent of what she made when she worked in plays and in pictures as well. In 1938 she refused an offer of eighty-five thousand dollars to make another picture in Hollywood, partly because she did not want to go to Hollywood but mainly because too much of the eighty-five thousand dollars would have gone for taxes. Actors, actresses, and writers suffer more from the pressure of income tax than people in ordinary businesses do, because prosperity in the theater and in the writing business is uncertain and often brief. An actress may go through several seasons of failures before she hits on a successful play, and a writer may work for years barely making a living before he writes a best-seller; but when success and money finally come, the government makes no allowance for the unprofitable years. Nor does it practically recognize the comparative brevity of a star's career. One year Miss Hayes's lawyer asked for a five-per-cent reduction in her income tax on the ground of depreciation; actresses, he argued, depreciate as surely as buildings and machinery do, and he went on to build up a picture that vividly suggested the slow dissolution of Miss Hayes, like a sand castle at flood tide. The Department of Internal Revenue was unimpressed, and Miss Hayes paid.

Things like that give Miss Hayes a panicky feeling about money, and she worries sometimes when her husband gives way to one of his expensive impulses. Charlie has been known, for instance, to lay out a great sum on a pool table for the nursery, maintaining that a pool table not only makes for conviviality but is also a fine thing for babies to hang onto when they are learning to walk; and he is forever settling down with a telephone on his stomach for a half-hour's comfortable chat with some friend in California at the usual

of \$6.25 for three minutes. When his wife reminds him that such indulgences come high, Charlie is elaborately indignant. "Is it my own money I'm using or is it not?" he demands. It is his own money he is spending.

The transformation of Helen Hayes from an ingénue into a dramatic actress of power and prestige came about largely through one of those accidents of the theater which allow producers, a harassed lot, to do most of their thinking in limousines. The failure of a play called *Young Blood* in the spring of 1916 left Miss Hayes with five hundred dollars and no job at a time of year when few new plays were being put on. With her mother, she decided to make her first trip to Europe, where the five hundred might last longer than it would in New York. When she returned one day from booking passage on a tourist-rate boat, her mother told her that William A. Brady had been waiting all afternoon and wanted her to play Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows* for four weeks at the Bijou Theatre. Miss Hayes reluctantly accepted the idea of going abroad, and *What Every Woman Knows* ran for a year in New York, followed by a profitable tour, mostly because actresses that had grown accustomed to seeing Miss Hayes in ingénue roles (and played even Cleopatra as a flapper) were impressed by the wisdom and earnestness of her portrayal of Maggie Shand, the little Scotch wife in Barrie's play.

Many actresses preserve their energies for their work by insisting on the right of personal peace that comes from having everything at home happen exactly as they want it to, but Miss Hayes's career in the theater, mostly a matter of simple appeal until *Coquette*, seems to have profited since then from a life that has been less than tranquil. Probably her most important professional step was the decision to play *Victoria Regina*—a conclusion she made in the bathroom of her house at Nyack. Max Gordon wanted her to do a dramatic version of *Pride and Prejudice*, and she had almost decided in favor of it when one evening she picked up Laurence Housman's book of plays about Queen Victoria, which Gilbert Miller had sent to her a few weeks before. When she had read a few pages, she became so interested in it that she took it into the bathroom with her for greater privacy and locked the door. She studies most of her parts in her bathroom, which is large enough for pacing and brooding. The next day she sent her regrets to Mr. Miller and telephoned Mr. Miller that she would like to do the Housman play. Her three years as Victoria brought Miss Hayes into contact with members of European royal families descended from the late Queen. The former Queen of Spain, a granddaughter of Victoria, saw a matinee of the play in New York and was so struck by the star's resemblance to her mother that she told reporters she had been obliged to go right back to her apartment after the performance and sit quite still for a long time. During her layoff of the play, Helen and Charles were staying at a house near the city when the late Duke of Kent, another guest, arrived late one night and came an equerry to the MacArthurs' room to say that His Royal Highness

was anxious to meet Miss Hayes and would be glad if she and her husband would join him downstairs for a drink. This amounted to a command, but Miss Hayes had gone to bed, and when Miss Hayes is in bed for the night nothing except the next morning gets her out of it. "You go down," she said to Charlie, and added, "If any dukes want to see me, let 'em come here." A few minutes later she heard footsteps chummily approaching the door, and Charlie breezed in with the Duke. Miss Hayes was lying with the blankets pulled up to her chin, her hair tumbled, and her face covered with cold cream. She still holds this against Charlie, but she is able to look on the bright side. "At least I didn't have to curtsy," she says. The incident she likes to remember during that trip was meeting, in London, the Dowager Marchioness of Milford Haven, whose father was Louis IV, Grand Duke of Hesse, and whose mother was Princess Alice, Queen Victoria's daughter. "Please tell me something I haven't been sure of," Miss Hayes asked the Marchioness. "Queen Victoria's mother was a German princess—did Victoria speak with an accent when she was Queen of England?" The Marchioness raised her hands in astonishment. "Ach, no!" she said. "She het no more eggzent den you or me!"

The tour of *Victoria Regina* is considered the most successful any play has had since the movies drove the theater out of the majority of American cities, but it was not without its mishaps. In Los Angeles, the opening night—a glittering affair attended by crowds of Hollywood celebrities—coincided with a convention of the Knights of Columbus; some hundreds of these revellers stood outside the theater to watch the stars arrive in a blaze of floodlights and, when the doors had closed on the last of them, lightheartedly returned to their own pleasures, which happened to be shooting off firecrackers on the curb. They kept it up during most of the performance, but it had a happy result in the end; the second night nearly everybody came back to find out what the people on the stage had been saying, and it was almost as brilliant an occasion as the first. In Toledo, on Saturday night, Charles Francis, who played Lord Melbourne, wanted to make a midnight train to spend Sunday with relatives nearby, and his anxiety made him absent-minded. In the middle of his scene alone with Miss Hayes, she was startled to hear him say, "Your Majesty, have you ever heard the story of the monk who was vouchsafed a vision?" This was no part of the play, being a speech which had been cut in rehearsal months earlier, but Miss Hayes took the cue and proceeded calmly with the uncut version. "Why, no, Lord Melbourne. Pray tell it to me," she said. Mr. Francis helplessly told it all while Miss Hayes sat back inwardly shaken with a wild mirth at the spectacle of a man who was trying to catch a train hopelessly involved in telling a long story that he need never have started. Such situations do not ruffle her when she is acting, but off the stage she is inclined to be helpless in unexpected ways. She has, for instance, no sense of direction and has regularly lost money betting nickels against other members of the cast who prophesy that she will

turn the wrong way when she steps out of the stage door. "They like to watch her walk confidently up the alley toward, say, a brick wall, and then to murmur indulgently, "Where do you think you're going, dear?" On trains, during the tour of *Victoria Regina*, Harry Essex generally pinned a type-written slip of paper outside the men's room, where he knew Helen would be sure to see it repeatedly. "The ladies' room is at the other end of the car," it read.

One thing Miss Hayes is sure of is that she will make no more motion pictures; her experiences in Hollywood have considerably baffled her. In 1931 the urgent pleas of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer took her there to make *The Sin of Madelon Claudet*, for which Charles MacArthur had written the script. Miss Hayes, finding herself awash in a sea of incredibly beautiful women who were always behaving picturesquely, was once more overcome by her old feeling of drabness, and was depressed to learn that the studio felt the same way about her. Press agents and makeup men assailed her with publicity buildups and false eyelashes, and when she declined both, they shrugged sadly and forgot her. In the projection room, when she went to see the rushes, or completed scenes, of *Madelon Claudet*, Miss Hayes sat dejectedly in a corner while executives in nearby seats gloomily smoked cigars and left afterward without speaking to her. The night the picture opened in Hollywood, Helen and Charlie avoided the theater and fled to some friends who had rented a house at Santa Barbara. Long after midnight, as they sat on the terrace, someone who had traced them there telephoned the news that the audience was still applauding and calling for Helen Hayes, and that the picture was the sensation of the year. A few minutes later telegrams began to arrive from excited executives. "You are the greatest actress in the world" was about the most moderate of these messages. Miss Hayes, astonished, decided then and there on what seemed to her a gesture appropriate to Hollywood. "Ah, me, Hollywood!" she sighed, and jumped into the swimming pool with her clothes on.

Helen Hayes received the Motion Picture Academy Award of 1931 for *Madelon Claudet* and followed it by a widely praised performance as the young nurse in *A Farewell to Arms*. But the creed of moving-picture producers is a simple one; with them, an actor who plays gangsters well must play gangsters forever, an actor who is good as a detective is cast as a detective all his life. Now that Helen Hayes has triumphantly played Queen Victoria and the aging Harriet Beecher Stowe, Hollywood understands that she knows how to play old ladies, and she has had some striking picture offers. One came from Mervyn Le Roy, who wanted her to play the role of Granny in a picture based on a story by William Faulkner. Miss Hayes protested mildly that she was tired of playing an old woman and would like to do a contrasting part for a change, and Le Roy then demonstrated that Hollywood, too, can be flexible. "O.K.," he said at once, "in the picture we'll make Granny young."

## LEONARDO DA VINCI

(From Men of Art)

Thomas Craven (1931)

O wretched mortals, open your eyes!

*Leonardo's Notebooks*

LEONARDO DA VINCI is perhaps the most resplendent figure in the history of the human race. In person, distinguished and strong; in bearing, generous and gentle; in intellect, a giant; in art, the most perfect painter who ever held a brush, he stands so far above the ordinary mortal that his name, for centuries, has signified less a man than a legend, less an artist than a magician. During his lifetime his presence stirred people to wonder and admiration, and to uncomfortable conjectures on his marvellous powers. When he walked through the streets of Milan, his long fair hair crowned with a black cap and his blond beard flowing down over his favorite rose-colored tunic, passers-by drew aside, and whispered to one another, "There he goes to paint *The Last Supper*!" He would travel from his house across the whole length of the city to work on the picture, mount the scaffold, add two or three touches of color, and then go away; at other times he would paint in the deepest concentration from morning till night, without food or drink. Kings and cities bid for him, as if he were, himself, a work of art; commissions were thrust upon him by public opinion; and when one of his cartoons was exhibited at Florence "a vast crowd of men and women, old and young—a concourse such as one sees flocking to the most solemn festivals—hastened to behold the wonders produced by Leonardo." The loveliest woman in Italy, a duchess whose habit it was to dictate to artists the pictures she fancied, implored him again and again to paint for her a little twelve-year-old Christ, or "at least a little picture of the Madonna, devout and sweet." The picture was never painted. Leonardo was also an artist in warfare, and pressed by all sorts of demands entered the service of Cesare Borgia as chief military engineer. It is no wonder that such a figure should have passed so swiftly into legend.

The legend was not of Leonardo's making. No man ever labored so steadfastly and scientifically to destroy mysteries and to enlighten the world by discoveries proceeding from observation and experiment. Profoundly religious, he was the enemy of superstition and magic; disillusioned and skeptical, ceaselessly inquiring into the operations of all phenomena, he was at the same time a poet who loved all outward shapes and forms—children, stern old men, enchanting women, horses, flowers, mountains and moving waters—and who tracked every outward manifestation of life down to the secret source of its energy. "O marvellous necessity," he declared, "thou with supreme reason constrainest all effects to issue from their causes in the briefest possible way!" This law burned in his mind, colored his ambitions, provided him with a scientific basis for his investigations, determined the nature of all his perform-

ances. He saw no essential difference between art and science; his mind was serene, strikingly deliberate, realistic, and endlessly experimental, and yet filled with the artist's delight in the making of new things. Whatever he applied himself to—and we shall see that he attempted everything under the sun—he considered as a problem in construction. He put no trust in inspiration or momentary impulses; he was a master of calculations, a thoroughly modern man, superbly conscious in his methods and perfectly balanced in his procedures. He believed with Blake that "if the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man, as it is, infinite"; and to the end that he might understand the connection of all things, he trained his faculties consciously and with the utmost rigor, and with immense toil and no small amount of pain. He believed that all the laws of structure are within the scope of the human mind, and that once these laws have been grasped, then all things become of equal importance, and man can create spontaneously, like God himself. It scarcely needs to be said that his passion for omniscience was not realized. After all, he was mortal, a Florentine susceptible to human influences and predisposed to certain forms, gestures and scenes. And he was never able to create spontaneously. He painted but few pictures, and those after infinite reflections and readjustments. He struggled for sixteen years with an equestrian statue that was never finished. But in the completeness of his knowledge and in his conception of the world and the whole celestial system as one vast design, he came closer to universality than any other man.

When Leonardo was fifty-two years old, he entered the following item in his notebook:

"On July 6, 1504, Wednesday, at seven in the morning, died Ser Piero da Vinci, notary to the Palazzo del Podestà, my father. He was eighty years of age and left ten sons and two daughters." There is no further comment. His relations with his father had been pleasant and honorable, but he had freed himself from fears and lamentations and had learned to accept events with excellent composure. His mind contained the whole of the past and the beginning of everything that was to come. "In rivers," he said, "the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes: so with time present." His father's family rose from the soil, produced four generations of notaries, and by accident, an artist, and then reverted to the land again. It was a virile stock: Ser Piero's youngest child appeared fifty years after his first-born, Leonardo. Recently a genealogist, exploring the ancestral properties of the family, discovered a direct descendant of one of the artist's brothers. The man was a peasant, crushed and silent and overworked, but not without memorable dignity as he drove his oxen over the steep hillsides—and his name was Leonardo da Vinci!

Leonardo was born in the village of Vinci, a few miles west of Florence. He was an illegitimate, his mother being a peasant girl of sixteen who, for a consideration, surrendered her child and became the wife of a craftsman. His

first years were spent among the mountains of his grandfather's country estate; at the age of thirteen he was received in his father's house at Florence. As a youth he saw the shining Tuscan city rise to the height of her physical power and artistic grandeur. The Prince of the Medici, Lorenzo the Magnificent, the most civilized scoundrel of the Renaissance, was engaged in strangling the commonwealth with despotic bonds forged by an unexampled mastery of statecraft, and to cajole the favor of the populace kept the city riotous with festivals and tournaments worthy of his splendid title. Always the politician, Lorenzo was as well a lavish patron of the arts, a poet and classical scholar, and his villa was the meeting place of the most brilliant minds in Italy. But the old austerity of Florence was gone forever. The masses, incapable of genuine gaiety and relaxation, yielded to organized frivolity and subtle tyranny, and at length, ashamed of their silly levity and softness, hearkened to the ravings of the Puritan spellbinder, Savonarola. The artists, debilitated by culture, substituted taste for strength, and affected the ideals and unseemly refinements of the old Greeks and Romans. The glory of the city lingered on in the genius of Leonardo and Michelangelo.

Leonardo was never at ease in Florence. Though it has, with reason, been urged and echoed that he is the matchless composite of all that the Renaissance contributed to civilization, he was a lonely figure in the center of culture. He was above the coarse mercantile spirit of his age; he was lacking in the push and harsh aggressiveness necessary to material success; he would not be hurried or commanded; he did not venerate the past—he studied it only to be delivered from it; he had a wise contempt for book-learning and declared that “whoever in discussion adduces authority uses not intellect but rather memory”; he was suspicious of the wholesale worship of Greek and Latin—a fetish the world has not yet shaken off; his decency and self-respect made it impossible for him to solicit favors from corrupt prelates—“friars,” he wrote down, “that is to say, Pharisees”—and to find a convenient outlet for his comprehensive energies. Thus he was, for all his delight in life, and his social graces, a man of few friendships. Very early he learned to keep his own counsel and depend on his own resources. His solitary habits were enhanced by his position in the Vinci family. There was no particular dishonor attached to illegitimacy, but his half-brothers and sisters—his father married four times—a swinish lot, jealous of his superior gifts, seized upon his irregular birth as an excuse to get rid of him. But it did not matter. The world was bigger than a quarrelsome family circle. He avoided and forgave them, and in his will left them some money.

The young Leonardo was extraordinarily precocious. When a boy he displayed his ability in many directions, in mathematics, music and every branch of design. He played the lute, “singing to that instrument most divinely,” as Vasari fondly relates, and improvising both words and music; he modelled figures in bas-relief and made drawings of faces, animals and flowers. His

father, a fashionable lawyer but a man of sense, showed some of the drawings to his friend Verrocchio, and so astonished was that master at the quality of the work that he accepted the boy immediately as his pupil. No better teacher could have been found in Florence. Verrocchio was a bachelor whose life was devoted entirely to intellectual pursuits. He was not the greatest painter in the world, but in sculpture he was unsurpassed, and he was also renowned for his skill in goldsmithing, geometry, music and wood-inlaying. Leonardo's loyalty to his master was the only personal tie formed in his youth. He remained in Verrocchio's workshop from his thirteenth to his twenty-fifth year, probably the most purely enjoyable period of his career. It was the time of learning rather than accomplishment. Here he found support in his scientific researches; here he met Botticelli, Perugino, and Lorenzo di Credi; close by were the brothers Pollaiuolo whose studies of the nude were among the latest marvels of art. He lived soberly in his master's house; his fame was rising and he was by common consent the most richly gifted and enviable young man in Italy. Reluctantly, five or six years after he had become a licensed painter, he set up his own shop, for he had little interest in art as a physical exercise or a means to a livelihood, and disliked having to finish a work within a specified time. Nor was he, like Michelangelo, possessed of a mad competitive fury which drove him to impossible commissions and bound him to the service of thankless popes.

During Leonardo's first residence at Florence his mind was enormously active. He was continually experimenting—striving to perfect new methods of expression. Art absorbed only a part of his attention, or, as he would have said, he encompassed the union of art and science, analyzing natural forces and phenomena empirically and co-ordinating them with creative vision. It was not, of course, a new thing for an artist to concern himself with scientific problems: his master was a mathematician and an engineer, and most of his distinguished predecessors had studied anatomy, perspective and light and shade—but only so far as such matters had a practical bearing upon art. Leonardo was the first modern man of science. He observed life minutely and patiently, testing his theories by laboratory methods; he was the founder of the science of geology; he was a botanist with a classified herbarium; he formulated the law of the parallelogram of forces and invented deadly engines of warfare; he dissected corpses to ascertain the relation between function and structure and ascribed the deaths of persons of advanced age to hardening of the arteries. And he went further. He believed that all substances are inherently connected, mutually dependent, and in the final analysis, as modern chemistry insists, interchangeable. Hence he regarded every fact as sacred and every form as a symbol of universal significance. He conceived the world as a living organism warmed by the sun and nourished by the circulation of rivers just as the human body is maintained by the movement of the blood. But his view did not lead him into quack metaphysics or astrology. He conceded the supernatural but did not invoke it, confining himself to observable



issues. His universe, as Paul Valéry has aptly pointed out, was entered by a well-devised perspective

Applying his ideas to art, he scorned the specialists, avowing that no man is so big a fool that he cannot succeed in one thing, if he persists in it, and calling attention to the infinite diversity of nature, "the various kinds of animals there are, the different trees, herbs, and flowers, mountains and plains, springs, rivers and towns." Occasionally, when he felt he was ripe for the task, he painted a picture, and his pictures are, structurally, so perfectly put together that every part takes its position in space with scientific inevitability. And all the components—the rocks, trees, fingers and faces—are painted with equal tenderness and care, with the devotion of one who said, "We have no right to love or hate anything unless we have full knowledge of it."

Naturally, with this unlimited range of interests, Leonardo painted less than the average artist, but it is certain that he painted, at least in his early years, a great deal more than has been preserved. His reputation among his contemporaries, though fabulous and somewhat sinister because of his inventive powers, was primarily that of an artist. It was the general opinion that whenever Leonardo undertook a commission he would produce something wonderful to behold—and he generally did. But from 1478 to 1483, his first years as an independent artist, we have only three authenticated pictures, the *St. Jerome* in the Vatican, the *Adoration* in the Uffizi, and the *Virgin of the Rocks* in the Louvre. None of these brought him any money, and the first and second are unfinished. Yet he contrived to live, not sumptuously, but well, keeping servants and horses. The conclusion is that he supported himself by painting, and that a number of canvases from this period are still in existence.

In his apprenticeship Leonardo seems to have been a faithful assistant to his master. Precocious as he was, he was obliged to learn the essentials of art. It is a fact not sufficiently recognized that the painter leans heavily on tradition and that his originality asserts itself slowly, after laborious study of past developments. The reason is clear enough. The writer has the advantage of a medium which is shaped and cultivated and enriched by conversation, and it is not necessary for him to read anything—many authors apparently have not—to produce a sophisticated and moving work. But the language of painting is limited to a few practitioners, and the artist, without instruction and without examples to guide his initial efforts, would be as helpless as a child. Leonardo's first work was in sculpture: Vasari mentions certain heads of "smiling women and children, done in his first youth, which might be supposed to have come from the hand of a master." He likewise "formed models of different figures in clay on which he would arrange fragments of soft drapery dipped in plaster, and from these he would then set himself patiently to draw on very fine cambric or linen with the point of a pencil in the most admirable manner." He must have seen specimens of Greek sculpture; he studied the men who had founded the great tradition of Florentine art, espe-

cially Masaccio; he journeyed to Arezzo to examine the frescoes of Piero della Francesca, another painter who worked from clay models, and incidentally to make drawings of stratified rocks.

From the scanty records dealing with his early years we might infer that Leonardo was shadowy and mysterious and something of a dilettante. Nothing could be more false. His personality was vivid and ingenuous, his intentions definite and consistent. But his contemporaries could not fathom his complex mind—and he did not turn out pictures with the regularity expected of one so magnificently endowed. Stories went round of his exceptional strength: how he could mount unbroken stallions and how he could bend a horseshoe as if it were a coil of lead; he was left-handed or ambidextrous, as has been fairly well proved, drawing with his left hand and painting with his right; he was fond of animals, “treating them with infinite kindness and consideration,” a singular thing in an Italian, and when he passed shops where birds were sold, so Vasari tells us, “he would frequently take them from their cages, pay the price demanded, and let them fly away.” It has been suggested that Leonardo’s kindness to birds arose from another motive—his interest in flying-machines and aerial problems. He made models and drawings of mechanical appliances of every description, demonstrating by diagrams to the city magistrates, who could not refute him and could not believe, how the church of San Giovanni might be raised and steps placed beneath it without injury. He consorted with mutes to observe the expression of feelings by gesticulations; extraordinarily receptive to visual impressions, he adorned his notebooks with sketches, done from memory, of unusual types he had encountered, handsome or hideous—heads as delicately proportioned as the finest Greek sculptures, faces as repulsive as Savonarola and “The Ugly Duchess”; he invited peasants to his house, entertained them with stories, marked their peculiarities, and threw them into fits of laughter by caricaturing their queer faces.

At the age of seventeen, if we are to judge by the angel and the landscape which he painted in Verrocchio’s *Baptism*, Leonardo was a remarkably mature artist commanding a style of his own. With such a beginning, most painters would have rushed into a fervent career of profitable commissions and popular acclaim. Not so Leonardo. The modelling of forms by the subtle flow of light into dark; the scientific analysis of atmospheric effects; the psychology of emotions and the relation of gestures and facial expressions to the deepest feelings: such things possessed him, and hundreds of others. He was indifferent to the hero-worshipping of a populace which boasted so loudly and understood so little. And, as I have said, he would not be hurried. We need not vex ourselves over the pictures done in collaboration with his master: the quarrelling micrologists will never agree upon these joint products. Of more importance are his innumerable drawings. In his *Treatise on Painting*, he places the graphic arts at the top of all forms of expression, arguing, among other things, that the visual image is much more explicit and convincing

than any image evoked by words. Accordingly, when he describes a machine, engages to prove a theory, or record an observation, he supplements his text with drawings. There are literally thousands of these sketches, some purely expository, others elaborate studies for paintings or memories of scenes and figures. It would be difficult to exaggerate the radiant animation of Leonardo's work in black and white, but let us not fall into the error frequently committed by cranks and connoisseurs and set his drawings above his finished pictures. All drawings, in a certain small sense, are more satisfactory than paintings for the reason that they fulfil more perfectly a specific purpose. But how much more limited the purpose! Artists know this, if the critics do not. A drawing is essentially a framework, a study in structure. In most cases it is simply a preliminary sketch. Even the etching, a work complete in itself, is a pale thing of slight, suggestive charm when compared to a painting with its full-bodied splendor of color and mass.

Corot called Leonardo "the father of modern landscape." In a drawing dating from his twenty-first year, the first work entirely by his own hand to come down to us, we have the earliest independent landscape in Western art. It was, however, probably intended for a background. Despite his universal interests, his major concern, as a painter, was with the figure. The sketch is remarkable for its dramatic distribution of lights and darks, the beginnings of *chiaroscuro*, a technical method practically invented by Leonardo and destined to exert a tremendous influence on painting, for good and ill. He employed this method to accentuate modelling, that is, to give his forms greater bulk and relief. The richest effects in *chiaroscuro* are, of course, to be had in paint, but he obtains in black-and-white, by the simplest means imaginable, results almost equally astonishing. He has a series of madonna studies—a fine Florentine mother holding in her lap a child who is playing with a cat—which fairly glow with life. It is impossible to analyze the incomparable vitality of these diminutive sketches. We may say that his elastic outlines swell and recede with a wavy motion, that his knowledge of anatomy and muscular action enabled him to twist the figure into positions of exquisite movement, that, with his subtle power over light and shade, "he had only to stroke the surface with parallel hatchings in order to bring out relief, and to give an inestimable homogeneity of effect to his sheets." Such comments are true but largely technical, and they do not explain—nor can it be explained—how his figures reflect his own ideas, and how he caught and clarified within the mesh of a few lines certain smiles and movements and attitudes which reveal the workings of the spirit.

In Florence, when important malefactors had been apprehended and hanged, the magistrates appointed a prominent artist to paint the portraits of the rascals, head downward, on the walls of the town hall, an excellent custom, and one which, I think, might be advantageously revived in modern America. It would probably have no deterrent effect upon crime, but it would be a great boon to art. Every city would have an annual exhibition of

genuine social significance, and Washington would be the center of American art! After the infamous Pazzi conspiracy to extinguish the Medici, eighty criminals were lynched and thrown down to a rejoicing mob, and Botticelli was honored with the job of painting the leaders. The chief man of blood, Bandino, escaped to the East, was extradited by the Turks, and five days after he arrived at Florence was swinging from a rope. On a cold day in December, Leonardo, aged twenty-seven, notebook in hand, viewed the spectacle at close range and calmly sketched the victim, emphasizing the peculiar spinal stiffness and gaping terror of one whose neck had been suddenly broken, and jotting down for reasons known only to himself the various details and colors of Bandino's last costume. Another opportunity to observe the behavior of man under unusual circumstances. But he did not share the common hunger of the Florentines for slaughter; he believed that fighting and killing were senseless and uncivilized. Towards the end of his life he became a vegetarian.

About a year later he began his first great painting. The work was ordered by the monks of San Donato; the subject was the *Adoration of the Magi*, and he agreed to finish it in thirty months for a sum equivalent to \$3,000. The picture was never finished. It never, in fact, got beyond the greenish-red monochrome of the under-painting, and it remains a colossal sketch of the greatest complexity. Apart from its position in the development of Renaissance art, the chief claim of the *Adoration* on modern interest lies in its constructive transformations. It shows us that a work of art is never pre-conceived, that it begins simply, grows resolutely, and suffers endless alterations. The subject was dear to Leonardo's heart. Long before he accepted the commission he had experimented with it. He made drawings for the principal characters—dozens of them, nude and draped; he plotted out a marvelous perspective graph; three times he elaborated the idea into a tentative composition and as many times was dissatisfied; finally, he found, by trial and error, what he wanted and the actual painting was begun. But his newly discovered *chiaroscuro* defeated him. Determined to achieve the maximum of relief—the very perfection of modelling—by the use of strong lights and shadows gradually deepening into the densest blacks, he worked the picture into so low a key that he could no longer control it. Whereupon the monks lost patience and appealed to that handy manufacturer, Filippino Lippi, who, in short order, gave them exactly what their tastes required, a pretty thing of small artistic merit.

Leonardo abandoned the project with few regrets. The fundamental brainwork was done, the problem solved. Design, he said, was for the master, execution for servants. He had completely severed painting from ecclesiastical authority; to his own satisfaction he had proved that a multiplicity of forms could be put together with geometrical clarity. From the studies, Michelangelo derived his idea for his slaves; Raphael imitated the central figures, the Madonna and Child; before the design modern artists stare and gasp.

There is nothing to be gained by considering the work as a philosophical criticism of Christianity. I do not believe Leonardo intended anything of the kind: the painting must be regarded as an experiment. Notwithstanding the sweeping movement, the intense characterizations and significant gestures, and the flowing unity, it is, as a subject picture, unconvincing: the entire background—the galloping horsemen, the architectural ruins, and the broken landscape—though structurally related to, is emotionally isolated from, the rest of the drama. More convincing is the *Virgin of the Rocks*, the Louvre version, painted a year or so afterward. Here again he departed from the conventional treatment and stationed an enchanting and youthful Florentine woman, an angel, and two naked children in a grotto reminiscent of the caves of the Arno which fascinated him in his geological studies. But the idea is devoid of all incongruity. Science and observation and sentiment are perfectly fused; the design is flawless; the faces are refined to the last degree—carried further by Raphael, the type becomes, not more spiritual but vacuous, and with Luini, sickening; and the flesh painting has never been equalled—the children seem to have been fashioned in heaven by a creator who was a plastic artist.

Leonardo did not thrive at Florence and in his thirtieth year entered the service of the Duke of Milan. The occasion of his departure for the North is unknown. It seems that he made a certain musical instrument, a lute of silver in the shape of a horse's skull, and that Lorenzo de' Medici, greatly pleased with the invention, despatched him to Milan to play before the Duke for whom music had especial charms. At all events, he was only too glad to leave Florence, and aware of the wealth of Milan and the prodigality of the unlawful Duke, wrote a letter to his Excellency enumerating the various capacities in which he might be useful—if attached to the court. The letter is one of the most amazing documents on record. Coming from any one else, we might dismiss it as egregious bounce; in reality it is an application for employment from a man whose vast powers had never received more than passing consideration. In part Leonardo wrote:

"I have a method of constructing very light and portable bridges, to be used in pursuit of, or in retreat from, the enemy, with others of a stronger sort, proof against fire, and easy to fix or remove.

"For the service of sieges, I am prepared to remove the water from the ditches, and to make an infinite variety of scaling-ladders and other engines proper to such purposes.

"I have also most convenient and portable bombs, proper for throwing showers of small missiles, and with the smoke thereof causing great terror to the enemy.

"By means of excavations made without noise, and forming tortuous and narrow ways, I have means of reaching any given point, even though it be necessary to pass beneath rivers.

"I can also construct covered wagons, secure and indestructible, which,

entering among the enemy, will break the strongest bodies of men; and behind these the infantry can follow in safety and without impediment.

"I can make mortars and field-pieces of beautiful and useful shape, entirely different from those in common use.

"For naval conflicts, I have methods for making numerous instruments, offensive and defensive . . . and I can also make powders or vapors for the offense of the enemy.

"In time of peace, I believe that I could equal any other as regards works in architecture. I can prepare designs for buildings, whether public or private, and also conduct water from one place to another.

"Furthermore, I can execute works in sculpture, marble, bronze, or terracotta. In painting also I can do what may be done, as well as any other, whosoever he may be.

"I can likewise undertake the execution of the bronze horse which is a monument that will be to the perpetual glory of my lord your father of happy memory, and of the illustrious house of Sforza.

"And if any of the above-named things shall seem to any man impossible or impracticable, I am perfectly ready to make trial of them in whatever place you shall be pleased to command, commending myself to you with all possible humility."

The Duke did not hesitate, and Leonardo was engaged forthwith as general constructionist and court utilitarian; and remembering that he remained with his Excellency for sixteen years, we may conclude that he made good his claims. The records of his life at Milan are confused and sparse, and in our ignorance we must be content with a few details. Besides a substantial salary, his position carried with it a house and vineyard and numerous perquisites. He lived unostentatiously with his pupils and apprentices, avoiding the princely splendor of Raphael and the squalid loneliness of Michelangelo, kept strict accounts and saved a little money. "It is only those who have too much who cannot bear vicissitudes and losses," he said. He painted the Duke's mistresses, designed costumes, organized festivals and supervised weddings—in a word, supplied the court with an artistic background. Whether these minor exactions bored Leonardo we do not know. Probably not. He had what most Florentine artists lacked—the ability to play and to enjoy life. Also, he looked upon his ceremonial duties as the price paid for his freedom. He had an assured living; was free to come and go as he pleased; and his obligations to the Duke did not interrupt his scientific studies. In a more serious vein, he assisted in the completion of the Cathedral, acted as hydraulic engineer, built canals with wonderfully improved locks, drained marshes, and invented the machine gun and breech-loading cannon. His intellectual activities at Milan fall into three divisions: the equestrian statue; the notebooks; and *The Last Supper*.

The Duke, Ludovico Sforza, known as Il Moro because of his swarthy skin, desired to honor the memory of his father with a bronze monument

and gave out that "there was only one man capable of the task, Leonardo, the Florentine; he alone was equal to it—and even he might not be able to finish it, inasmuch as it was the work of a lifetime." Leonardo entered into the plan with characteristic thoroughness, having in mind a horse that would throw the monuments of Donatello and Verrocchio into the shade and indeed surpass the efforts of the Greeks. He knew more about the subject than any man of his time—had he not outlined a book on the anatomy of the horse? For six years he fought with the idea of a horse in violent action—something unheard of in sculpture—making countless designs and studies of animal movement, then abandoning the scheme as too pictorial. At length he fixed upon a more restrained attitude, and at the end of ten more years of intermittent labor, constructed a clay model twenty-six feet high, devising a new kind of armature to support the beast. It must have been a stupendous sight—but, alas, it was never cast! He needed eighty tons of bronze for the horse alone—and the ducal exchequer was empty. Shortly afterward the French invaded Milan, Il Moro was captured, and the model was used as a target by Gascon bowmen. Soon it crumbled into the earth again—one of the greatest tragedies in art. Some years later, in Florence, Leonardo was arguing a passage from Dante with a friend when Michelangelo, an authority on the *Inferno*, happened to pass by. On being asked civilly to expound the quotation, Michelangelo, who envied the composure and freedom of Leonardo, turned upon his rival savagely. "You're the one who made an equestrian model that was never finished—to your eternal shame! You couldn't cast it!" As a parting shot: "And those castrated Milanese believed in your ability to do it!" Leonardo, in his fifties, smiled at the impudence of youth and said nothing.

The notebooks of Leonardo constitute a repository of incalculable scientific research and speculative inquiry. From boyhood it was his habit to record his theories and observations; the habit grew with years, and at the age of thirty-seven, in Milan, he began to revise and collate his papers, and to keep his notes on a more extended scale with a view to complete formulation. But other duties continually interfered; his experiments multiplied; his writings piled up, and he was never able to give them anything like systematic arrangement. As a consequence, we have today, dispersed in European libraries, 5,000 manuscript pages of unclassified reflections set down in reversed, or mirror writing, and embellished with drawings of the highest value. Let us make no mistake about the notebooks. They are not the manderings of a metaphysician nor the pompous effusions of the professional hemlock-drinker. In method and in terminology, in magnitude and limpidity, they reveal one of the finest brains ever put in a human head, the brain of the artist-scientist, or shall we say, the universal artist? Havelock Ellis, examining these documents from a scientific point of view, credits Leonardo with being the founder of engineering and the study of anatomy and geology, a biologist in every field of mechanism, an hydrographer, geometrician, master of optics, and inventor of innumerable varieties of ballistic machines and ordnance. And

these were only a fraction of the man! But unfortunately he did not give many of his discoveries to the world. Possibly he feared the Church and "the timid friends of God," as he called them, his ideas being so greatly at variance from orthodox Christianity, and including the belief that the soul, though divine, does not exist apart from the body. For whatever cause, the manuscripts lay concealed for centuries, and science in the meantime had produced Bacon, Newton, and Watt. In geology he established the laws of petrification; he was aware of the circulation of the blood; he invented the military tank, hydrophonic devices for communication among ships, roller bearings, and the wheelbarrow; he described the flight of birds and made drawings of a "bird-man" and of aeroplanes driven by a propeller attached to a spring motor; he worked out every possible type of domed architecture and designed a cupola for St. Peter's sixty years before Michelangelo; he planned hygienic cities with underground avenues flushed by canals, and houses limited in height to the width of the streets, complaining that "people should not be packed together like goats and pollute the air for one another"; he had a cure for seasickness—the list is endless.

In all the 5,000 pages there is but one reference to women, a certain "Catarina who worked in a hospital—and had a fantastic face"; in the whole life of Leonardo there is no record of a single love affair, or indeed of a distant Platonic friendship. He who dissected the human body, studied its proportions and movements, and made cross sections of embryos, who penetrated the soul of woman and painted madonnas of divine serenity and charm, declared that "intellectual passion drives out sensuality," and that "the act of procreation and everything connected with it is so disgusting that the human race would soon die out if there were no pretty faces and sensual dispositions."

In the section devoted to painting, Leonardo deals with the fundamental values of art, presenting the subject both scientifically and in the universal terms of God and man. He defines painting technically as modelling, "the task of giving corporeal shape of the three dimensions on a flat surface," spiritually as the rendering of emotions, or states of the soul, by means of appropriate postures and movements. He advises the artist to acquaint himself with all phases of life and to subject its details to the severest criticism—to go directly to nature and experience for his materials and not to make pictures out of other pictures. On the other hand, he counsels against imitation, emphasizing repeatedly the necessity for synthesis and organization. "The painter," he points out, "who draws merely by practice and by eye, without any vision, is like a mirror which copies all the objects placed before it, without being conscious of their existence." The treatise contains, besides directions for depicting everything imaginable from draperies to deluges, an intricate and exhaustive analysis of optical phenomena accompanied by illustrations of the most searching and portentous character. It is not too much to say that Leonardo's knowledge of light and atmospheric effects is equal to



that of the modern Impressionists, or even superior. He describes at length the division of tones, the color of shadows—particularly the variable blues and violets—and the vivid illumination obtained by the use of complementaries, but he rejects the methods of the Impressionists on the ground that they dissolve form and wreck design. Though he said that “the eye is the window of the soul,” he could not think of art as a chromatic formula or the mechanical imitation of visual appearances.

The illustrations to the notebooks afford us beautiful proof of the difference between artistic drawing and photography. Here we have sketches of scientific apparatus, interiors of gun foundries, cannon, hydraulic engines, median sections of the skull, muscles, bones, fossils, leaves, trees, and cloud formations, all of which are a joy to behold. None but Leonardo could have made these drawings. They are separated from the photograph by a gulf as wide as that which separates the poetry of Shelley from the tabulated reports of the New York Stock Exchange. Did he, as a scientist, merely attempt to represent and describe with cold-blooded accuracy the object before him? Obviously not. The artistic impulse, co-existent and predominant, incited him to reconstruct his materials, to add himself to them, to make infinitesimal alterations of contour, to introduce light and shade and subtle variations of natural appearances for the sake of harmony. Thus a dead skull or a cogwheel becomes a living organism—a creature of Leonardo’s brain, a dynamic part of the world remade.

With such a brain a man should be capable of anything. But there is, let me explain, an idea that will not down, a superstition widespread, mischievous and nonsensical, that a painter should not have any brains, that he is, when really artistic, a sensitive instrument through which God’s will automatically functions, a gilded harp upon which the winds of life play tremulously, plucking out divine melodies. And if, perchance, a painter does possess a brain, the sensitive numskulls who faint before a shapely bosom or a bowl of fruit, snuffle with fear and sigh contemptuously, “He thinks too much!” They cry “He has no feeling, no inspiration! He works by formula!” Now if ever a man were able to paint by formula, surely Leonardo would be the man. But the more he studied, the deeper his wisdom, the sharper his experiences, the more troublesome did the making of pictures become. Each new undertaking implied a new and unique design. Inspiration meant nothing to him except the choice of subject-matter which he could mould to his own ends. In the popular sense, he was not sensitive at all: he was calculating, penetrative, and rational. It took him three years to paint *The Last Supper*.

This masterpiece was finished in the year 1497. It was painted in the damp refectory of Saint Mary of the Graces, at the command of the Duke of Milan, who wished to erect a memorial to his deceased wife in the church that had been her favorite place of worship. The theme was common property and had been conventionalized by many treatments. It had been in Leonardo’s

mind for years, and long before he received the commission he had made provisional studies for the work. It was a challenge to his highest powers, a stimulus to perfection. The painting immediately lifted him above his contemporaries, and throughout the ages has remained not only the most famous picture in the world but the supreme exemplification of monumental design. Of the grandeur of the undamaged original we can only guess. Leonardo, impatient of fresco, painted in tempera on a ground prepared to resist the clamminess of the wall. The medium was a disastrous choice. The ground began to contract and flake, and within fifty years the picture was covered with spots; deterioration went ahead slowly; dreadful restorations were made by heavy-handed meddlers; some imbecile Dominican monks cut a door through the lower central part; Napoleon's dragoons stabled their horses in the refectory and threw their boots at Judas Iscariot; more restorations and more disfigurements. About twenty years ago an Italian of genius completely removed the unsightly smears laid on by alien retouchers and found a way to prevent further decay. Today *The Last Supper* is in fair condition. What we see is genuine Leonardo, and it is enough to warrant an appraisal based on the fact itself and not on historical panegyrics or misleading copies. The popularity of the picture may be attributed, in a large measure, to the engraving made by Raphael Morghen in 1800, an engraving that resembles a Sunday school chromo. Morghen copied, not the original, but a drawing executed by a nondescript Florentine, diluted Leonardo's stern conception into pervasive sentimentality, and substituted for the noble figure of Christ a nice lymphatic gentleman, sleepy and a little sad.

The greatness of a work is not an indeterminate quality. Without reciting the theories propounded in behalf of a pure æsthetic, or talking the language of abstractions, it is possible, I think, to specify one or two things which those who have trained themselves to look at pictures acknowledge to be implicit in a great painting. In the first place, the conception must not be mawkish, sentimental or eccentric. It must be apparent that what the artist has to say is worthy of his best efforts. He must show us that he has good reason for the selection of his theme, that he knows vastly more about it than we do, and he must illuminate it with the sympathy born of closest intimacy and the gusto that comes from exceptional wisdom. If the idea is old—and what idea is not?—he must bring to it new evaluations and fresh considerations. Second, the purpose must be transcendently certain and definite. The artist must express his meaning with clarity and power, throwing aside all needless accessories, disturbing flourishes, and exhibitions of virtuosity. What we experience vaguely and with mixed emotions he must present with singleness and undivided emphasis. Third, the picture must give us something to think about; it must have many avenues of interest, many sources of appeal. Avoiding merely physical seductiveness, it must ask for the cooperation of our noblest faculties, emancipating our emotions and stimulating us to feel and live deeply and liberally. In short, it must act upon the spirit and lift us

out of our daily round of mean preoccupations into a realm of purging tragedy, exhilarating joy, profound human pity, dramatic power.

Does *The Last Supper* fulfil these requirements? We may say that it does, without question and without reserve. The picture is too well known to call for description. The subject was consummately suited to test his theory that in painting the "facial expressions must vary according to the emotional state of the person, and that the attitudes of the figures must correspond to the emotions reflected in the faces." He prepared his studies with extraordinary care, giving minute attention to detailed characterizations—to hands, beards, and costumes—roving the Ghetto for a model to serve as Judas, and experimenting with the design. He has left us, in his notebooks, an eloquent account of the psychological action which he regarded as the mainspring of the drama. At first he adhered to the conventional arrangement, with St. John asleep by the side of Christ, and Judas by himself in the foreground, but the actual work of construction changed his plans. At last, with a stroke of genius, he found the one and only way to tell the story. Christ sits in the middle of the table with the apostles in groups of three on either side. He has said, "One among you shall betray me." The utterance is a proclamation of tragedy, and to reveal the tragedy, Leonardo portrays the effects of the word as it pierces the souls of the twelve men. Everything in the picture conspires to this end: the lighting; the architecture; the bare walls stripped of distracting ornament and converging to carry us directly into the scene; the perspective plan; the heads, gestures and faces. Never was a painting so perfectly put together. Structurally, all the lines focus in the right eye of Christ, the movement beginning slowly in the distant figures and increasing in agitation as it approaches the center; emotionally, the prophetic word of the Lord reverberates among the two groups of His followers, provoking horror, consternation and curiosity, and binding the groups together by the force of spiritual tension.

It is an undeniable fact that every one comes to a picture of *The Last Supper* in a peculiarly receptive mood, with a mind preattuned to the tragic situation and eager to participate in the religious sentiment. Hence the subject, if only tolerably presented, is more moving and impressive to the average person than the magnificent mythological compositions of Rubens, which as illustrations have lost their significance. Theoretically one art should not be dependent upon another; it should express itself fully in its own language. Painting should be self-revealing and not rely upon literature to complete its meaning. Acting on this premise, certain critics advocate a "pure approach" to art; that is to say, they tell us, in all seriousness, that when they look at a picture they judge it as the only thing of its kind in existence, suppressing all associatory elements, and responding like infants with eyes and souls but no experiences, to the emotional appeal of lines, colors and volumes. Perhaps they are able to behave in this fashion when looking at the utterly negative and empty nudes and still-lives—pictures done by artists who seem to have

no connection with life whatever—comprising most exhibitions, but when confronted with Leonardo's *The Last Supper* they cannot overlook the subject-matter. Despite their anæsthetic theories, something irritatingly human and eternally sad gets under their skins. So they say, "It is not art. It is exaggerated illustration."

I mention these unpleasant matters only to remind the reader that all art partakes of illustration. The moment an artist contrives a unit of form, a figure, let us say, he makes a representation clothed with habitual associations and memories from which the beholder cannot remove himself by an act of will. Leonardo did not consider it vulgar to tell a story in paint. Nor did he imagine that to create a spiritual type one had merely to represent an effeminate figure with the traditional blond beard and label it Christ. *The Last Supper* is illustration in that it brings before us with convincing reality a situation first described in the medium of words. But we cannot say that it is the counterpart of the Biblical story. It is Leonardo's *The Last Supper*, a part of his mind, containing his science, his understanding, and his preferences. It is more than illustration: on one side of a table large enough to accommodate only six or seven guests he has placed thirteen figures, but we are not conscious of any crowding; the disciples are Italians, and no one seems to notice that they have no legs; his Christ is beardless; there is, in truth, nothing Oriental in the conception. The psychological import is conveyed with such absolute precision and dramatic force that the meaning of the picture would not, I think, be lost on any one ignorant of the Christian legend. Into these excited and gesticulating apostles Leonardo has infused his immense fund of human experiences; he has indeed so thoroughly filled his characters with their appropriate emotions that they become, not Italians posing as vehement Jews, but living symbols of grief, terror, bewilderment, and woe. And the Christ has the grandeur, the imperturbable grace and tranquillity characteristic of Leonardo himself in his noblest moods.

I have watched painters go into ecstasies over this picture—over the plastic form, the marvellous composition, the distribution of the figures, apparently so simply ordered yet, on analysis, so complexly balanced and inextricably united; the rushing, involute rhythms, the expressive hands,—and I have wondered what Leonardo would have done, had he wished to represent, not a group of men bound together by a community of tragic purpose, but merely an assemblage of plastic forms. He would, I fancy, have produced something analogous to those compositions of Picasso, so astonishing and yet so meaningless; for Picasso is a man who has tried to learn the secrets of art from other art and not from life. It was the subject that released Leonardo's creative activity and inspired him to incorporate a great idea into a great design. And I have also fancied, in moments when I permit myself a little indulgence in the more esoteric meanings of art, that Leonardo, having finished *The Last Supper*, must have surveyed the work with a smile of satis-

faction, seeing that he had represented once and for all time how men of ordinary clay are appalled by the presence of supreme intelligence.

The following year the French crossed the Alps and captured the swarthy tyrant of Milan. Leonardo noted the event succinctly: "This day the Duke lost his state, his possessions and his liberty—and none of his works is completed." By unfinished works he probably meant "the horse" and certain enterprises in engineering, and with the hope of carrying them out under the new regime, he tarried a while in the North. It is told that on being entreated to make something extraordinary for the reception of the foreign monarch, he constructed a mechanical toy in the shape of a golden lion which, after advancing a few steps, opened its huge jaws, and disgorged a bundle of lilies. We next hear of him in Venice where he invented a diving-bell and swimming-belt, and at the opening of the new century he is in Florence again, deep in geometry and anatomy, and painting little. As field engineer for Cesare Borgia, he explored central Italy from coast to coast and proved himself a cartographer of immense skill. These maps are still useful, showing mountains, roads, rivers and towns that have changed but slightly since the sixteenth century—all accurate in configuration and drawn in relief with as much care as he bestowed upon his madonnas. The political manoeuvres of the Borgias did not concern him, and after Cesare's collapse, he returned to Florence and prepared for one of the monasteries a cartoon of the *Virgin and St. Anne*, a study which caused great commotion in the greedy city, reviving for a moment the ancient custom of celebrating the appearance of a new masterpiece with processions and ecclesiastical extravagance. At the same date he made his only venture in mythology, a drawing of *Leda and the Swan*. More than likely he painted the subject as well, for there are half a dozen Ledas in the European galleries, all springing from a common ancestor and imitative of Leonardo's style.

Finally it occurred to one of the burghers to remind his fellow citizens that Leonardo was beginning to look like an old man, that he was much given to wandering, and that if the people desired to wring from him something to the eternal lustre of the commonwealth, they had best lay hands on him while he was residing among them. It was therefore decreed that the Grand Council chamber, speedily completed after the expulsion of the Medici, should be decorated with martial scenes witnessing the power of Florentine arms, one wall being entrusted to Leonardo da Vinci, and the other to Michelangelo, a young man of unlimited promise. With her usual malice and to humiliate an errant son, the city imposed on Leonardo the Battle of Anghiari, an encounter in which the Milanese were conquered by the warriors of Florence. But war to him was an exhibition of energy and he had no faith in patriotic motives. He chose a cavalry episode, a number of horsemen fighting for a lost standard, intending to paint the personification of bestial frenzy—the diametrical opposite of *The Last Supper*. The cartoon raised a

tumult of applause. Such cyclonic fury, such concentrated energy and rhythm had never before been even suggested in art. But the painting itself came to grief. Leonardo, always trying new things, used an encaustic medium and the colors, instead of fusing with the plaster under the action of heat, ran down the wall. The picture was ruined. Nothing that relates to it has survived except some wonderful drawings and two or three copies of part of the design, one by Rubens. Leonardo abandoned the work without more ado, and the Florentine council, naturally, was plunged in gloom. The artist, however, does not appear to have been troubled by the catastrophe: he was interested in Mona Lisa.

The *Mona Lisa* shines out among the portraits of the world like a star. Though time has appreciably impaired the color of the picture, the glory of it increases with the passing years. The canvas hangs in the Louvre, a veritable shrine attracting pilgrims from every land, all of whom gaze upon it with a liquid reverence not accorded to any of the more essentially sacred pieces in that gigantic morgue. Fable and gossip have made the famous lady a strange and uncanny charmer, a sphinx whose smile entrapped the soul of a great artist and impelled him, bit by bit, to build up an image of unfathomable mystery. The image lives on, but the legend also endures—and the soul of the artist is buried in the mystery of a woman's smile!

The story is that in the year 1502, Leonardo looked upon Mona Lisa, the third wife of Francesco del Giocondo, and found her fascinating, for she was, according to contemporary opinion, "exceedingly beautiful," and he was by no means insensitive to feminine charms. She was young and her husband was old and impotent and unkind. He had pawned her jewels and forced her to put on mourning so that the absence of personal ornaments might not be suspected. When Leonardo desired to paint her portrait, she assented eagerly, cast a spell upon him, and became his mistress. She had lost her only daughter and was chronically sad, and it is told that he hired an orchestra to lighten her melancholy and jesters to make her smile. And it was the smile that held him in her toils and called up the secrets of his soul.

The legend is damaged by several inconsistencies. Leonardo was not a youth at this time; he was in his fifties and fearfully venerable, appearing indeed, in a portrait sketch made three years later, an octogenarian. He worked on the picture for four years, but not merely to preserve the features of a striking woman—likenesses came easy to him and he had no use for them as such. Nor was much of the period devoted to Mona Lisa. Florentine artists did not paint directly from models but from black-and-white studies. Furthermore, we know that Mona Lisa posed for the head alone—the torso and hands were drawn from other sitters, a fact which may account for the rather stiff joining of the neck and shoulders—and that Leonardo, the most painstaking of painters, in solitude, undisturbed by music and a beautiful woman, slowly created a figure of imperishable vitality. Whatever he may have thought of the sitter, he prized the picture more, as an artist should, keeping

it in his possession to the end of his days. All things considered, it would seem that his interest in the model was neither protracted nor sentimental, and that he found in nature a face which helped him to realize in paint an ideal type towards which he had constantly moved from his earliest efforts. His concessions to portraiture only served to enhance this ideal: Mona Lisa was a lady and he gave her the sensitive hands of an aristocrat; he observed the mourner's costume but turned it into living drapery; the high forehead and the plucked eyebrows, current marks of distinction, facilitated the modelling of the features. But Mona Lisa, the woman, the mistress, the Neapolitan, has vanished from the picture forever. It may fairly be questioned whether the work is a portrait at all, that is, as we understand the term today. Certainly the head resembles all the other heads that he painted, male or female, and might be substituted for any one of his madonnas. Mona Lisa is the sister to his other forms, only more exquisitely embodied.

She is purely a devotional creation, devotional in the largest sense; the incarnation of Leonardo's love for life, and women, and all perfect forms, the nexus between the world of memories, experiments and disappointments and the flawlessly appointed world of his imagination. Into this picture he has projected all of himself and all his arts—his subtlety, his elaborate and dazzling refinement; his scientific perfection, his psychological penetration, his puzzling serenity, his infallible knowledge of structure. In comparison most of the paintings of the world seem flat and lifeless. Like it you may not, but you cannot escape its reality. It stops you and holds you with confounding directness. Many other canvases are perhaps corporeally as substantial and convincing; other figures are even more truthful representations of flesh and blood; but this, you feel, is more than flesh and blood. The face is that of a more sentient being, a more highly organized intelligence. You are not conscious of paint, of color, or of canvas. Lifeless material has been shaped into a human face, and the face, as Leonardo said and intended, becomes "the mirror of the soul." Your spirit is somehow touched by another spirit, and for a moment you may be repelled—repelled by a figure that is made in the form of a human being and yet made without weaknesses or imperfections. To apprehend the *Mona Lisa*, you must remain with the picture, see it again and again, for it contains, like all works of art, the history of its creator, and you cannot, at a single glance, enter into the mind of Leonardo da Vinci.

The figure is a solid and as permanently established as the rocks behind it, yet plastic, and free to bend and breathe and move, and brought into fullest relief by the purposely strange background of dwindling rivers and shadowy peaks; the landscape, wrought out with as much affection as the face of the woman, is a living thing; the smile is achieved by imperceptible variations in the lines of the eyes and mouth—so delicately modelled, in fact, that it is lost in coarsely screened reproductions. The smile is not peculiar to Mona Lisa; it was not original with Leonardo. It is written in the faces of the archaic goddesses of Greece; we find it in the sculptures of his master,

Verrocchio, and in other paintings of the time. If Leonardo was prepossessed with it, then so is every artist with certain expressions and attitudes. Why he so loved the smile we cannot say, but we do know that by means of it he made his faces conclusively real and emblematic of the deepest emotional states. The mystery of the *Mona Lisa* arises from the romantic gossip attaching to the model and to repeated misconceptions of the artist's purpose. The emotional life of art is, in the final analysis, like all life, insoluble. We can no more explain it than we can explain a tree or a woman or any organic thing, and when we attempt to do so, we are driven into dreams and mysteries. Leonardo's aim was to dispel mysteries, not to create them. His purpose was to create a form which should be neither vague nor enigmatical—not a stimulus to reveries, but actually and in all its parts an articulate and convincing expression of the spirit. He succeeded, and that, I think, is enough.

His business with the city of Florence having ended in monumental disaster, Leonardo departed for Milan again, taking the *Mona Lisa* along with him. The Republic granted him a leave of absence, but with an ill grace, strongly bent on forcing him to attend to the unfortunate battle picture. He never returned. From time to time he received angry protests and sarcastic communications from the Florentine magistrates reminding him that he had made "only a little beginning on a great work," but these he calmly disregarded. In the employ of the French viceroy, he superintended the building of canals and other public utilities, and prepared designs for an equestrian statue. His second venture in heroic sculpture, like his first, was never to be cast. His painting was limited to two pictures, both religious, both of the highest importance. One, the London version of the *Madonna of the Rocks*, was executed with the help of a colleague to appease an unforgetting group of Franciscans who compelled him by legal action to live up to a contract made twenty years before; the other, *St. Anne with the Virgin and the Infant Christ*, now in the Louvre, though faded and unfinished, is a marvelous reconstruction of an old subject. Disregarding the inflexible arrangements of his predecessors, he poured into a recalcitrant theme all his wisdom and all his skill, and developed a group of human forms which, for expressive power, plastic richness, and intricacy of design, cannot be too lavishly extolled. It was his last great picture. The French were expelled from Milan, and he travelled to Rome to work for the Pope.

His visit to Rome was a mistake. Leo X, sleek and superficial, was busy exploiting Raphael's fresco factory, and could not understand a man of Leonardo's leisurely habits and interminable ponderings. At the end of two unprofitable years he journeyed to France, invited thither by Francis I, one of his warmest admirers. Comfortably lodged in a chateau in Touraine, exempt from creative toil, he was eminently at peace with the world. His hands were paralyzed and he could not paint, but nothing could interrupt his speculations, his desire to discover the connection between all things so that he might create spontaneously, like God himself. One day he wrote in his



notebook, "When I thought I had been learning how to live, I had only been learning how to die." In his will he commended his soul "to our Lord Almighty God and to the glorious Virgin Mary, to all the blessed Angels and Saints, male and female, in Paradise." He died on the first of May, 1519, in his sixty-seventh year.

## THE MONSTER

*Deems Taylor (1937)*

HE WAS an undersized little man, with a head too big for his body—a sickly little man. His nerves were bad. He had skin trouble. It was agony for him to wear anything next to his skin coarser than silk. And he had delusions of grandeur.

He was a monster of conceit. Never for one minute did he look at the world or at people, except in relation to himself. He was not only the most important person in the world, to himself; in his own eyes he was the only person who existed. He believed himself to be one of the greatest dramatists in the world, one of the greatest thinkers, and one of the greatest composers. To hear him talk, he was Shakespeare, and Beethoven, and Plato, rolled into one. And you would have had no difficulty in hearing him talk. He was one of the most exhaustive conversationalists that ever lived. An evening with him was an evening spent in listening to a monologue. Sometimes he was brilliant; sometimes he was maddeningly tiresome. But whether he was being brilliant or dull, he had one sole topic of conversation: himself. What *he* thought and what *he* did.

He had a mania for being in the right. The slightest hint of disagreement, from anyone, on the most trivial point, was enough to set him off on a harangue that might last for hours, in which he proved himself right in so many ways, and with such exhausting volubility, that in the end his hearer, stunned and deafened, would agree with him, for the sake of peace.

It never occurred to him that he and his doing were not of the most intense and fascinating interest to anyone with whom he came in contact. He had theories about almost any subject under the sun, including vegetarianism, the drama, politics, and music; and in support of these theories he wrote pamphlets, letters, books . . . thousands upon thousands of words, hundreds and hundreds of pages. He not only wrote these things, and published them—usually at somebody else's expense—but he would sit and read them aloud, for hours, to his friends and his family.

He wrote operas; and no sooner did he have the synopsis of a story, but he would invite—or rather summon—a crowd of his friends to his house and read it aloud to them. Not for criticism. For applause. When the complete poem was written, the friends had to come again, and hear *that* read aloud. Then he would publish the poem, sometimes years before the music that

went with it was written. He played the piano like a composer, in the worst sense of what that implies, and he would sit down at the piano before parties that included some of the finest pianists of his time, and play for them, by the hour—his own music, needless to say. He had a composer's voice. And he would invite eminent vocalists to his house, and sing them his operas, taking all the parts.

He had the emotional stability of a six-year-old child. When he felt out of sorts, he would rave and stamp, or sink into suicidal gloom and talk darkly of going to the East to end his days as a Buddhist monk. Ten minutes later, when something pleased him, he would rush out of doors and run around the garden, or jump up and down on the sofa, or stand on his head. He could be grief-stricken over the death of a pet dog, and he could be callous and heartless to a degree that would have made a Roman emperor shudder.

He was almost innocent of any sense of responsibility. Not only did he seem incapable of supporting himself, but it never occurred to him that he was under any obligation to do so. He was convinced that the world owed him a living. In support of this belief, he borrowed money from everybody who was good for a loan—men, women, friends, or strangers. He wrote begging letters by the score, sometimes groveling without shame, at others loftily offering his intended benefactor the privilege of contributing to his support, and being mortally offended if the recipient declined the honor. I have found no record of his ever paying or repaying money to anyone who did not have a legal claim upon it.

What money he could lay his hands on he spent like an Indian rajah. The mere prospect of a performance of one of his operas was enough to set him to running up bills amounting to ten times the amount of his prospective royalties. On an income that would reduce a more scrupulous man to doing his own laundry, he would keep two servants. Without enough money in his pocket to pay his rent, he would have the walls and ceiling of his study lined with pink silk. No one will ever know—certainly he never knew—how much money he owed. We do know that his greatest benefactor gave him \$6,000 to pay the most pressing of his debts in one city, and a year later had to give him \$16,000 to enable him to live in another city without being thrown into jail for debt.

He was equally unscrupulous in other ways. An endless procession of women marches through his life. His first wife spent twenty years enduring and forgiving his infidelities. His second wife had been the wife of his most devoted friend and admirer, from whom he stole her. And even while he was trying to persuade her to leave her first husband he was writing to a friend to inquire whether he could suggest some wealthy woman—*any* wealthy woman—whom he could marry for her money.

He was completely selfish in his other personal relationships. His liking for his friends was measured solely by the completeness of their devotion to him, or by their usefulness to him, whether financial or artistic. The minute

they failed him—even by so much as refusing a dinner invitation—or began to lessen in usefulness, he cast them off without a second thought. At the end of his life he had exactly one friend left whom he had known even in middle age.

He had a genius for making enemies. He would insult a man who disagreed with him about the weather. He would pull endless wires in order to meet some man who admired his work, and was able and anxious to be of use to him—and would proceed to make a mortal enemy of him with some idiotic and wholly uncalled-for exhibition of arrogance and bad manners. A character in one of his operas was a caricature of one of the most powerful music critics of his day. Not content with burlesquing him, he invited the critic to his house and read him the libretto aloud in front of his friends.

The name of this monster was Richard Wagner. Everything that I have said about him you can find on record—in newspapers, in police reports, in the testimony of people who knew him, in his own letters, between the lines of his autobiography. And the curious thing about this record is that it doesn't matter in the least.

Because this undersized, sickly, disagreeable, fascinating little man was right all the time. The joke was on us. He *was* one of the world's great dramatists; he *was* a great thinker; he *was* one of the most stupendous musical geniuses that, up to now, the world has ever seen. The world did owe him a living. People couldn't know those things at the time, I suppose; and yet to us, who know his music, it does seem as though they should have known. What if he did talk about himself all the time? If he talked about himself for twenty-four hours every day for the span of his life, he would not have uttered half the number of words that other men have spoken and written about him since his death.

When you consider what he wrote—thirteen operas and music dramas, eleven of them still holding the stage, eight of them unquestionably worth ranking among the world's great musico-dramatic masterpieces—when you listen to what he wrote, the debts and heartaches that people had to endure from him don't seem much of a price. Eduard Hanslick, the critic whom he caricatured in *Die Meistersinger* and who hated him ever after, now lives only because he was caricatured in *Die Meistersinger*. The women whose hearts he broke are long since dead; and the man who could never love anyone but himself has made them deathless atonement, I think, with *Tristan und Isolde*. Think of the luxury with which for a time, at least, fate rewarded Napoleon, the man who ruined France and looted Europe; and then perhaps you will agree that a few thousand dollars' worth of debts were not too heavy a price to pay for the *Ring* trilogy.

What if he was faithless to his friends and to his wives? He had one mistress to whom he was faithful to the day of his death: Music. Not for a single moment did he ever compromise with what he believed, with what he dreamed. There is not a line of his music that could have been conceived by

a little mind. Even when he is dull, or downright bad, he is dull in the grand manner. There is greatness about his worst mistakes. Listening to his music, one does not forgive him for what he may or may not have been. It is not a matter of forgiveness. It is a matter of being dumb with wonder that his poor brain and body didn't burst under the torment of the demon of creative energy that lived inside him, struggling, clawing, scratching to be released; tearing, shrieking at him to write the music that was in him. The miracle is that what he did in the little space of seventy years could have been done at all, even by a great genius. Is it any wonder that he had no time to be a man?

## LORD OF MARUTEA

### THE DIRECTOR'S STORY

*James Norman Hall (1933)*

#### I

BEFORE the war there were a number of Germans scattered among the islands of French Polynesia. Afterward they were gathered in and sent back to Germany, and their property confiscated. Herr Müller was an exception; he was left on Marutea. I don't know why, unless it was that he had lived there for so many years. I shouldn't wonder if they were afraid to molest him. Whatever the reason, there he was when I went to his island in 1923.

I was employed by a European syndicate at that time, under contract to produce one picture a year for a term of three years, each of them to be concerned with the life of primitive people in remote corners of the world. That is how I came to be interested in Marutea in the first place. I was attracted by its name almost as much as by its isolated position. As a matter of fact, it proved to be precisely the island I was searching for.

"His island" I have called it, and so it was, although he didn't own a square foot of land outside his trading compound; but he had lived there for so long that he had come to look upon it as his own property. "My island," he would say; "my copra," "my pearls," "my pearl shell," "my people." He was right about it, too. The very fish in the lagoon and in the sea beyond belonged to him, and could only be caught and eaten by his authority. Mussolini himself might have been envious of this man's power. It was confined to the one island, but absolute within that limit.

He did own one piece of property in addition to his trading station—the *Turia*, an ancient, leaky, sixty-ton schooner used to bring his copra and pearl shell to the Tahiti market and to carry back his supplies of trade goods. When I arrived at Tahiti the vessel was in port there, on one of her annual calls. Her skipper was a huge man of forty-odd years, with mild brown eyes and a gentle, engaging manner of speech. He was Otto Müller, Jr., the oldest of his father's large family of half-caste children.

Otto Müller was shocked, almost incredulous, at my request for passage to Marutea for myself and my two cameramen. I can think of no other words with which to express his attitude.

"I couldn't possibly take you, sir," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"My father would never permit it. He will have no visitors on the island. He would be very angry with me if I brought any."

He regarded me with an awed, frightened expression, like that of a small boy asked by another boy to rifle his father's desk, or to commit some other unheard-of depredation.

Well, the more he objected, the more I urged. No other vessel called at Marutea; it was the *Turia* or nothing, and I was determined to go. At last I gained Otto's reluctant consent. I agreed to take full responsibility, and to explain to his father, if it should be necessary, how I had forced myself aboard the schooner with all my goods and chattels. Otto was of the opinion that we should not be permitted to land. I told him that I was willing to take a chance on that and, if permission were not given, would pay whatever his father asked for passage in the *Turia* to another island I had in reserve, one hundred and fifty miles from Marutea.

## II

At the outset of the voyage I put Herr Müller out of mind; I would worry about him when the time came. Meanwhile, we had to reach his island in a vessel that leaked like a wicker basket. We must have pumped half the Pacific through her before we reached Marutea. We had calms and head winds day after day, and once we were hove to in a gale that I thought would founder us. My two cameramen, George Crossland and Karl Zimmerman, thought it a great lark. Fine lads, both of them. As for myself, it seemed to me that we had been born on that vessel; that we had traveled beyond the limits of the known world. Not a sail, not a smudge of smoke on the horizon—nothing but empty sea and the tired old schooner, her belly half full of salt water, trudging along in the centre of it, under an empty sky.

We got there at last, and from the moment of sighting land all the anxieties and discomforts of the voyage were forgotten. I shall not attempt to give you an idea of the beauty of the place. Words can't do it, pictures can't do it. Music could, and only music. If you were to see Marutea, you would understand why I think so.

Through my binoculars I saw Herr Müller from afar; he was standing on the beach near the landing place with a telescope on a tripod before him. He leveled it at us from time to time as we approached, searching the schooner carefully, from stem to stern. Several times the glass was directed at me, long and steadily. I confess that I felt uncomfortable under that long-range scrutiny. An influence decidedly hostile seemed to be making itself

felt. A large crowd of natives stood or sat in a circle around him. They made a glorious picture against the background of dazzling white beach, coconut palms, and blue sky. I saw no buildings except a sort of warehouse at one side, near the beach. Even that was beautiful with the shadows of palm fronds moving over its whitewashed walls. One would have said it had been built for that purpose.

The schooner was brought into the wind a quarter of a mile offshore and the whaleboat lowered. Otto Müller was very uneasy and apprehensive. He could not go ashore with us, and he warned me to be careful what I should say to his father.

"Have you any suggestions as to how to begin?" I asked.

"No; only let him speak first, Mr. Forrest. I'm afraid there's no hope of his letting you stay. I shouldn't have brought you; I really shouldn't have!"

"Nonsense, Otto!" I said jokingly. "He won't shoot me, will he?"

Otto was silent for a moment, as though seriously considering this possibility.

"No, he wouldn't do that, but he might strike you with his walking stick. It is an ironwood stick, and he might hurt you badly. It wouldn't be the first time he has used it. He would be very sorry afterward, but then it would be too late."

Crossland and Zimmerman came ashore with me. With four native boys at the oars and one at the steering sweep, we approached the reef. It was an ugly-looking landing place, and the heavy onshore swell made it uglier still. We got across without mishap, but my heart was in my mouth for a few seconds. The boat grounded in the shallows twenty yards or so from the beach, and the sailors started to carry the three of us, pickaback, to dry ground. Herr Müller strode forward and shouted something to them in the native tongue. They dropped us so abruptly that I lost my balance and sat down in two feet of water. Crossland and Zimmerman were as surprised as I was, but they had not fallen and they whooped with joy at my plight. They were the only ones who laughed. The crowd of natives looked on in silence, gazing from Herr Müller to me and back again. He stood with his hands clasped over his cane, which looked more like a war club than a walking stick.

He was a magnificent figure of a man, with thick white hair and a snow-white beard reaching nearly to his waist. I had seen many an island trader in my wanderings, but never one like this. It was inconceivable to me that he could belong to that fraternity. Race and character were written all over him; he looked like some old German baron who had strayed out of the feudal system. Vitality radiated from him—from his beard, from the tips of his strong brown fingers, most of all from his blazing blue eyes. You felt it as you feel the heat of tropical sunlight, and it seemed to come from as

inexhaustible a reservoir. He folded his hands across his chest, one hand still grasping the stick, and waited for us to approach.

We all have our pride, and I could imagine what a ridiculous figure I presented as I waded, dripping, to the beach. Inwardly, I was boiling with rage, but I took care to conceal it. Remembering Otto's advice, I waited for his father to speak. He looked from one to another of us for a moment; then he said, in English, "Why have you come here?"

His voice was deep and powerful, and he spoke with only a slight accent. I suppose I should have been prepared for that question, but the fact was that I stood there, tongue-tied, like a small boy caught stealing cookies in his mother's pantry.

"Why have you come here?" he repeated. The knuckles of his huge fists were white, and I more than half expected him to swing his club without giving me a further chance to reply. He took a quick stride forward, and I needed all my presence of mind to keep from ducking. He didn't offer to strike me, however. With his stick he drew a line in the sand. "You will go no farther than that from where you stand," he said. Then he raised his arms horizontally and glanced back over his shoulder. Two husky young men sprang forward, ducked under his arms, picked him up, and staggered out with him to the whaleboat. A moment later they were across the reef and on their way out to the schooner.

### III

Never in my life before had I been so taken at a disadvantage. After the showing I had made before all those people, I felt that I must do something to reassert my manhood, so I walked across Herr Müller's boundary line and sat down in the shade at the upper slope of the beach. Crossland and Zimmerman came too. A murmur ran through the crowd at this defiant action, but whether of surprise or approval or apprehension it was impossible to say. Soon the hum of talk became general, but I noticed that the natives kept their voices under, as though they were afraid that Herr Müller might hear them even at that distance.

I glanced over the gathering, sick at heart at the thought that we should not, in all probability, be permitted to stay on Marutea. Nature has developed no finer race than the Polynesian. Here was the company for my picture, from the children to the great-grandparents. They had intelligent mobile faces, their teeth were flawless, as white as coconut milk, and their bodies were a delight to the eye. There was not a deformed or sickly-looking person among them. I picked out my principals there and then, and in the imagination I was already at work, the film, *Marutea*, taking shape.

The buzz of conversation died away; the whaleboat was returning. Herr Müller was now at the steering sweep. He had removed his shoes and his

white coat, rolled up his trousers to the knee, and was standing with his bare feet braced on the gunwales. In the intervals between the thunder of the surf we could hear him urging the oarsmen on, but, instead of coming to the usual boat passage, he steered to a point where the surf piled up in an awe-inspiring manner.

"Good Lord!" Crossland said. "Surely he won't try crossing there!" It looked like a mad attempt, but there was no doubt of Herr Müller's purpose. Immense coral boulders were scattered there, the wreckage, evidently, of some old hurricane, and the surf piling in among them spouted high in fountains of spray and solid water. All the natives were now on their feet, talking excitedly. Old Müller stood in an easy, careless posture, his head turned over his shoulder as he watched the following seas. I wanted to cheer at the noble picture he made. At last, far out, he saw the wave he was waiting for, lifting its back slowly and majestically as it swept in. He shouted his order and the men made their oars crack. Involuntarily I closed my eyes for an instant. When I opened them again the whaleboat was gliding down an appalling slope of surf between two boulders that dwarfed the little craft, and the great volume of water hurled over the reef carried them across the shallows and grounded their boat high up on the sand.

Herr Müller sprang out and came toward us in great strides, his arms outstretched, his face beaming. He seized both my hands and shook them warmly.

"Mr. Forrest!" he exclaimed. "You are welcome to my island! Forgive me, my friend! What a beast I am! I lose my temper like that—for nothing! But why did you not speak? And you have with you a countryman of mine, *nicht wahr?* It is this young man!" And he turned to Zimmerman and grasped him by the shoulders. "Not since ten years have I met a German!" He spoke rapidly and eagerly to Zimmerman, and a moment later turned again to me, laughing delightedly.

"Do you know what this young man say to me, Mr. Forrest? He thinks I am a wonderful boat steerer. Never has he seen anyone cross the reef like I do it. No, and you will never see another, my young friend! Ask these men, born on the island, who live in the sea half the time. Not one of them has the courage, or the strength, or the quick eye, like mine. I am seventy years old, Mr. Forrest, and I am the best man on this island, old or young!"

Of a sudden his eyes filled with tears.

"And I treat you like dogs! But why have you not told me? You are an artist! I too am an artist, Mr. Forrest. Yes, in this lonely place you find a brother artist."

"It is kind of you to call me that, Herr Müller," I replied; "but the truth is, I am only a maker of motion pictures."

"Well, that too may be art," he replied. "Never have I seen a motion picture, but I keep in touch with the world. I have my books from Germany, my reviews and illustrated journals. I know a little of what is being done in



this new form of art. It is not great, perhaps, like music, but I give it my sympathy, my respect."

To say that I was relieved is to say little. He was simply charming. I could hardly believe this the same man who had stood, grasping his club, half an hour before.

"Otto has told me," he went on. "You are employed by a German company. You wish to make a picture of our island life?"

"I should like to very much, Herr Müller. Will you let us stay?"

"Stay? Of course you shall stay!" he replied warmly. "You shall have everything you want. You have only to ask me."

#### IV

With the natives following, we crossed the island to the lagoon beach where the village lay. The houses were scattered along the curve of the beach for a distance of half a mile on either side of Herr Müller's trading station, and before them stretched the great lagoon, as placid as a mountain lake, shimmering in the morning sunlight. The native dwellings were of palm-frond thatch, and stood on clean coral sand that looked as though it were swept every morning; and so it was, as I found later. Every leaf, every twig, every fallen palm frond, was gathered up daily and burned by Herr Müller's orders. For all his many years of exile he had not lost his German passion for order and cleanliness.

His trading station was a two-story building of coral cement, with wide verandahs both upstairs and down. It stood at a distance of fifty yards from the beach, and the intervening space was like the military parade grounds one sees in German provincial towns—except that it was beautifully shaded with coconut palms, and fine old puka trees that must have been growing there from heathen times. The store and warerooms occupied most of the lower floor. Upstairs were his living quarters, cool, spacious, high-ceilinged rooms furnished with richly carved and massive beds, wardrobes, tables, chairs, and sofas. On the walls were mirrors in heavy gilded frames, and paintings of German landscapes in the romantic style of fifty years ago. There was even a grand piano. You can imagine our astonishment at finding one on a coral island seven hundred miles from the nearest steamship route.

I heard the piano played a few evenings later. It was a strange and memorable experience. We had had dinner with Herr Müller, served in his spacious dining room at a table that would have accommodated a dozen guests. Shortly after the meal he excused Crossland and Zimmerman, but it was plain that he wished me to remain. We smoked in silence for a few minutes; then he said, "Tell me, Mr. Forrest; you have recently come from Germany?"

"Not six months ago," I replied.

"You have been in Hanover, perhaps?" And, without waiting for a reply: "That was my home, and I have not seen it for fifty years!"

His eyes filled with tears and he leaned his head on his hands, gazing at the table in front of him. Not knowing what to say, I said nothing. I was surprised at this sudden change in mood; not five minutes earlier his light-hearted laughter had made the walls ring. Presently he raised his head, with such a look of desolation in his eyes that I was deeply touched.

"Forgive me. I cry this way—like a child. But it is not for nothing, believe me!" He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and blew a blast on his nose that must have been heard all over the village, but somehow there was nothing comical in the action.

"I have told you that I am an artist," he went on. "You have wondered about that, perhaps? You have said to yourself: 'An artist? *Was für ein* artist in such a place?' . . . I keep it locked up—so long—so long—here!" He struck his chest a heavy blow. "Sometimes, Mr. Forrest, I think I go mad! I am more than forty years in this savage place, and now my life is over. When I think what it might have been . . . And I have been ruined by my own father!"

He straightened up in his chair and his eyes blazed with anger. "A beast of a man! But no . . . what am I saying? He is dead. Yes, I have forgiven him, but it has been hard . . . hard. Listen, my friend. You shall judge."

## V

And then he told me his story. I wish that I could tell it as he did—with his voice, his words, his passionate intensity. He gave me the history of his life. Briefly, these were the facts of it.

He was the fourth of eight sons. His father was a wealthy and influential manufacturer of surgical instruments. He had definite plans for all his boys. Four were to go into the army, two into the diplomatic service, and two into his own business. When the fourth son gave promise of having remarkable musical ability, his father encouraged him to develop it. He was supplied with the best teachers that could be found, in both voice and piano, but it was no part of his father's plan that any of his children should follow a musical career. Music was well enough as an accomplishment, as an amusement for leisure hours, but this son was destined for the army, and into the army he must go.

Young Müller had his father's iron will and passionate nature. Music was the breath of life to him; and he determined to carve out a career for himself. In his eighteenth year came the trial of strength. His father commanded him to return home from Munich, where he was studying, prepared to enter an officers' training school. Müller refused. His father cut off his funds and the son was compelled to work for his living. No matter. He worked ten hours a day and continued his musical studies at night. In his twenty-first year he was given a place in the Hanover opera company. He joined it secretly, living in lodgings hidden away from his family, and studied and rehearsed his parts

without his father knowing that he was in the city. Then came the opening night of the opera season. It was the great event of his life. He had a triumph, he said, and was called repeatedly before the curtain with the principals. His father was present, and young Müller thought he had vindicated his right to direct his own life. The father thought otherwise. Being a man of great influence, he compelled the directors of the company to discharge his son.

"Then, Mr. Forrest, I am like a crazy man. You cannot know what this chance to sing means to me. In my dreams I have seen how splendid my future will be. Everyone is astonished at my voice, and my teachers have all said that I shall be one of the great singers of Germany, perhaps the greatest of my time. When I am told, 'You can no longer sing in this company; your father will not permit it,' I am like a man who has lost everything. If only I could be patient, and work, and say nothing! Hanover is not the only city in Germany. But no, in my grief, my great madness, I forgot everything. Think of it! I destroy my life to shame my father! Yes, that is what I do. I say to myself: 'I will sing no more! Never! Never! I will be like a dog, a homeless dog! I will throw dirt on the name of Müller!'"

For three years, so he told me, he held fast to this resolution. He wandered far and wide over the earth, and all the time his one desire was to degrade himself and disgrace the name of Müller. At last he came to Marutea, still planning some revenge that would break his father's heart. Then came the inspiration. He married an island woman, daughter of the chief of Marutea, but still a native, and when he had two children by her he sent all the way to Tahiti for a photographer to come to the island. He dressed himself, his wife, and their two children like the lowest of savages. They were photographed in this fashion before a palm-thatched hovel. He then sent home his marriage certificate and one of these photographs, inscribed, "To my father, from Otto Müller and his family."

"Then, Mr. Forrest, I wake up . . . like that!" and he snapped his fingers. "I am a man who has been mad, who has had an evil dream. Now it is gone; I am a Müller again, and my good German blood speaks to me. I have taken a terrible revenge; but it is too late now—the harm is done. I killed my father—that I was told by one of my brothers. His pride was broken forever. The anger I have kept so long leaves me, and I again wish to make something of my life. I have a wife. I have children I love; they are of the best Polynesian blood; I have no need to be ashamed. I see that I must build up my life here, on this island. When I come out of my bad dream I begin to plan, to create. This island shall be a kingdom for me, and all of these people shall be my children. I see how I can make them happy and prosperous, and I take charge of their affairs."

Then returned his great love and longing for music. He had sworn never to play or sing again, but with the first money he earned as a trader he sent for a piano. Gradually he sent for other things, so that he might live like a self-respecting German.

## VI

That, in the barest outline, is the story he told me. When he had finished he rose, and I thought I was to be dismissed; but no—this was to be one of his musical evenings. One night in every week, he said, his people came to hear him play and sing. "One must have music, *nicht wahr?* You will see, my friend, how my people love this music. It is necessary. No longer can they live without it."

Sure enough, when we walked out to the upstairs verandah, the whole village was gathering in the open space before his house. A chair was placed for me at one side of the crowd. The natives sat cross-legged on the ground, at a distance of twenty or thirty yards from the house. The piano was rolled out on the upstairs verandah and so placed that, while playing, Herr Müller would sit sidewise to his audience. Over it was suspended a gasoline vapor lamp, provided with a shade that threw the clear white light directly upon him. It was the nearest thing to a spotlight, I imagine, that he was able to devise.

Presently a bell was struck—three sonorous clangs. The latecomers seated themselves hurriedly and the hum of conversation died away. There must have been well over two hundred people in the audience. We waited in deep silence for some little time; then Herr Müller appeared, in full evening dress, as he might have appeared on the concert stage in Hanover. A fine figure he made as he came forward to the verandah railing and stood, resting his hands upon it, looking down at us. At the moment of his appearance the audience started a vigorous clapping of hands, and Herr Müller bowed gravely to right and left; then he seated himself at the piano.

Picture, if you can, that strange scene. It was a perfect tropic night, windless and clear. From the far side of the island came the faint thunder of the surf, giving a voice to mid-ocean solitude, and behind us lay the lagoon with the stems of the palms outlined in silhouette against it. Herr Müller's audience was all but invisible in the deep shade of the puka trees, but here and there a gleam of moonlight outlined a bare brown leg, the contour of a cheek, or the curve of a naked shoulder. The intense light of the vapor lamp fell full upon him, deepening the gloom outside.

I wish that I might have known his thoughts at that moment. One thing seemed quite certain: he was no longer at Marutea. He was in Germany—in Munich, perhaps, or Berlin, before a vast audience of his fellow countrymen. He was at the summit of his career, the great singer he had so often dreamed of being. He sat for a moment with his head bowed, his fingers resting lightly on the keys. Then he sang Wagner's "Evening Star."

"*Oh, du mein holder Abendstern . . .*" I can hear the words at this moment, sung, and powerfully sung, in his deep and splendid voice. I admit that I was stirred. I had not known what to expect of this performance. In outlining his story, I have said little of his superb self-confidence, his unshak-

able belief that his father had wrecked the career of one of the most promising singers in the whole of Germany. As I listened, I could easily believe that this might have been true. His voice had great range and flexibility, as well as power; it was one that a much younger singer might well have been proud of.

At the close of the song, prolonged and hearty applause broke out. He rose and bowed in his courtly manner to right and left. I could see tears trickling down his great white beard and gleaming in the lamplight. There was something inexpressibly pathetic, to me, in this makeshift of an audience, of a setting, that circumstances had forced him to accept and be content with; and yet it seemed to serve his purpose. Make-believe, if indulged in long enough by a man passionately eager to delude himself, may become almost as good as reality. So it was here, I think. What Herr Müller needed was an audience, the heartening sound of two hundred pairs of hands clapping vigorously at the close of each of his numbers. The rest he could himself provide. He had only to close his eyes to believe, for the moment at least, that all of his dreams had come true.

Naturally the thought came to me: How spontaneous is this applause? Remembering that these concerts had been taking place over a period of many years, I could imagine that his audience might have become bored with them. Furthermore, Polynesian music differs vastly from ours, and it was hard to believe that the Maruteans had ever cared greatly for Brahms, or Wagner, or Schubert, or Chopin. I watched with interest the faces of those near me, and, whatever the song or the instrumental number, they remained as placid and seemingly unmoved as the coconut palms. I observed that the applause was always started by the same old man. As long as he clapped, the others clapped; when he stopped, they stopped. Herr Müller saw nothing of this, of course, and he may have known nothing of it. These weekly concerts were given by his royal command, but in my opinion he truly believed that the natives attended for the pleasure they derived from them and not because of the fear which his dominating character inspired.

## VII

I shall pass quickly over the events of the following month. It was a busy, anxious, and happy time for me. Herr Müller had given us the use of one of his coral-cement copra houses for a studio. It stood on the lagoon beach, half a mile from his dwelling. There I installed my small electrical plant, my film driers, and the rest of our gear.

Herr Müller was kindness itself in helping us to get comfortably settled. At first he was like a child in his eagerness to see us at work; but as the days passed I became conscious of a change in his attitude. He tried hard not to show it, but I could see that he resented the new interest we had brought into the lives of his people. It deprived him, not of any of his authority, to be sure, but of the position he had held for so long in the very centre of the Marutea

stage. I did everything possible to keep him there. Never did we miss attendance at his weekly concerts, and I saw to it that there should be no distractions for which we were responsible on those particular evenings. Nevertheless, I was not easy in mind, and worked as never before to complete the filming of the picture in the briefest possible time. With a host of such violent and capricious moods, anything was possible. What I feared, of course, was that he might command us to leave the island before the work was finished.

Days passed, and everything went smoothly. We had splendid luck. The weather—everything—was in our favor. As for the company, they surpassed my most hopeful expectations. Half a dozen rehearsals sufficed to show the natives what we wanted: simply a pictorial story of their life as they lived it from day to day—fishing, pearl diving, housebuilding, dancing—all their individual and communal activities strung on the thread of a story concerning one family. They were wholly unself-conscious before the camera; not once in a dozen times was a retake necessary. I saw little of our host during working hours, but I passed more than one pleasant evening in his company. One day he sent me word that he was going on one of his periodical visits to another smaller village on an island fifteen miles distant across the lagoon. He was to be absent for ten days or longer.

In the midst of our work, while he was away, I all but forgot his existence. His son Otto acted as my interpreter and general factotum. Otto and I had struck up a warm friendship during the long voyage to Marutea, and it had grown since that time. It was interesting to see how he expanded and threw during his father's absence, and the effect was equally noticeable upon the rest of the people. They were like children who had been granted an unexpected holiday. Nearly everyone in the village belonged to my company, and by this time their interest in the picture was enormous.

Meanwhile, Crossland and Zimmerman had been working late every evening developing film. I was looking forward to projecting the pictures. I wanted to show the company the results of our work, and I knew that I could better explain what remained to be done by letting them see themselves in the shots already taken. At last we were ready, and I informed the village that if they would come to the studio that evening I would show them what they had been doing all this while.

We rigged up our screen out of doors, against one of the walls of the copra house. The whole village came. Otto and perhaps half a dozen others had seen motion pictures at Tahiti when they had gone there with Herr Müller's schooner. The others had little conception of what would be forthcoming.

At first their astonishment was so great that they sat in complete silence; then they went half crazy with delight. They laughed, they yelled, they rushed up to the screen to convince themselves that those moving figures were merely pictures and not their own flesh and blood. I had to stop the

show until we could quiet them down a little. Otto explained that they must remain seated and not throw their shadows on the screen.

We were in the midst of the performance when I heard, or thought I heard, the ringing of the bell at Herr Müller's house. I had a decidedly uneasy moment. I remembered that this was the usual evening for the weekly concert, but I had heard nothing of his return and knew that he was not expected back for several days. Zimmerman was at the camera. I strolled a little way down the beach and listened again for the bell. Not hearing it, I decided that I must have been mistaken. Certainly none of the audience had heard it, which was not strange, considering the noise they were making.

When the performance was over they begged to see it again. I was glad to comply, and while repeating it I explained to them, through Otto, the work yet to be done, and how the various scenes would fit into place when all had been taken. We were getting on famously. Otto was in the midst of one of his explanations when he stopped short as though he had been smitten dumb. Following his awe-struck glance, I saw his father standing at the rear of the crowd. He was in evening dress, his concert costume, and stood drawn up to his full height, his arms folded across his mighty chest. In one hand he grasped his ironwood walking stick.

Not a word was said. Otto began to move backward as though some mysterious force were pushing him away. He melted into the darkness. Every member of the audience followed him. They neither walked nor ran—they simply vanished, without a sound. Within thirty seconds the place was deserted except for Zimmerman at the camera, Herr Müller, and myself.

I was prepared for anything. I was prepared to see him step forward and smash our precious camera to bits. Had he offered to do so, I doubt whether Zimmerman or I would have lifted a finger to prevent him. I have spoken of his immense vitality. It was more than that; what, precisely, I cannot explain, but the influence, whatever it was, seemed to rob us, for the moment, of everything but the capacity to feel it. He came forward two or three paces, breathing heavily, as though he had run all the way from his house. He raised his ironwood stick and pointed it at me, and opened his mouth as though about to speak; but instead of doing so he turned and strode off into the darkness.

## VIII

I passed a sleepless night. My first impulse had been to follow him, but upon second thought it seemed best to allow time for his anger to cool before making any attempt to explain. I was certain that no one had been informed of his return. Had it been known, Otto would have told me. We were to have started work at daylight the next morning. No one came—not a soul. I waited for an hour, and then went along to the village.

A few children were playing about in the dooryards; otherwise the village street was deserted, but I saw faces peeping concernedly out at me as I went

along. I found Otto and a younger brother, Walter, at the store. They greeted me in subdued, anxious voices. They had not dared speak to their father. He had forbidden the people to leave their houses without his permission. While they were telling me this we heard his tread on the staircase. The two sons, with frightened apologetic glances at me, disappeared into a back room.

I was ready to bring into play all the tact and diplomacy learned in twenty years of motion-picture directing. Fortunately they were not needed. All that I had to do was to point out that he himself was responsible for the failure of his people to attend his concert. He had returned home several days before he was expected, and late in the evening, after everyone had left the village to come to our picture show. I assured him that no one had heard the ringing of the bell. Strangely enough, this simple explanation had not even occurred to him.

"Mr. Forrest! What a fool I am!" he said. "Yes, it is so! I am like my father. I lose my temper and then I remember nothing, not even why I have lost it! You will not be angry with me? You are working so hard to do a beautiful thing. You wish to show people in the great cities this lonely island and the life of my people, so strange, so romantic, and I . . ." He shook his head ruefully. "You will forgive me? Tell me, what can I do to show you how deeply I am sorry?"

Forgive him? Indeed I did, what little there was to forgive. When truly himself, he had the most charming manners—a gracious, Old World courtesy rarely met with anywhere. The difficult thing for me to realize, in all my dealings with him, was that I had to do with a man who, in many respects, had never grown up. Intellectually he was splendidly mature, and yet he had the capacity for intense suffering of a sensitive, imaginative child. With him a slight, however small, and whether fancied or real, grew in a moment to enormous proportions, completely overshadowing the light of his day. I almost envied him that virginity of spirit. Had it not been for his fearful temper, how wholly lovable he would have been!

Nothing would do then but we must have one of our long talks. I excused myself as delicately as possible.

"I was rather hoping to go on with a scene we started filming yesterday, Herr Müller, if the people could come . . . ?"

He slapped his forehead.

"*Donnerwetter!* I forget! Of course! You wish to work, and I have told them . . . *Ach, du lieber Gott*, what a man I am! Otto! Walter! Come! Come quickly!"

They appeared from the back room, and their father galvanized them into action at once. Walter ran up to ring the bell which hung at the end of the upper verandah. The natives came thronging from their houses onto the village recreation ground in front of the store. I wish that you might have heard him address them. He was now in his happiest mood; he laughed with



them, joked with them, and the effect was immediate. If they feared him, it was very plain to me that they loved him as well.

"Now, Mr. Forrest, what will you have them do? *Ach*, how can you forgive me who make you waste so much of this beautiful morning? Along with you, Otto! No, wait! You shall stay at home. It is I who shall go with Mr. Forrest to-day. I shall work hard, hard! You will see. Come, my children, all of you!"

What a day it was! We accomplished more than in any four days previously. We filmed two scenes in particular that removed any doubts I may have had as to the ultimate success of the picture. I am prouder of that afternoon's work than of all my years of directing, either before or since, and the credit belongs to Herr Müller. He could have made a success of a dozen different careers, motion-picture directing among them. He knew by instinct what I wanted done; and with his knowledge of island life, and his deep insight into native character, he offered suggestions that were priceless to me.

## IX

If only I could have let well enough alone! Well enough? It was vastly better than well enough. I had a feeling of deep obligation toward him, and in my desire to show it I blundered. My intentions were of the best, but I don't excuse myself. The consequences of that blunder were tragic.

You see, there was something more than pathetic, to me, in the immense need he had for his people's admiration and respect, not as a man and a leader—that he could and did take for granted,—but as a musician, a singer of genius. He had brooded so long over his ruined career, his spiritual pain at the thought of it was, I am convinced, all but unbearable at times. It was softened somewhat by his belief that his gifts had not been entirely wasted; that even here, among children of nature whom most people would regard as little above savages, he could give pleasure by his singing. I realized more clearly every day how vital it was to his happiness that he should believe the Maruteans deeply loved his music. I wanted him to keep that illusion, if it was an illusion. It seemed to me that if I could help him keep it I should be doing as great a service as it is possible for one man to perform for another.

Well, I encouraged him to believe that our picture was nothing to his people in comparison with his music. He could not help seeing their interest, but I made light of it, and convinced him that it was merely the interest in novelty and would quickly pass. He was wistfully eager to believe me.

"You feel that, Mr. Forrest?" he said earnestly. His eyes lighted up with pleasure and he laid a hand affectionately on my shoulder. "One sees that you are truly an artist! We know, you and I, that music stands first, *nicht wahr*? Yes, it is so, in all lands, with all peoples. It will always be so. Even here, among these Polynesians, there is this great passion for music."

We were walking back through the groves, from the studio to his house. He halted and faced me. "You know, we can prove that," he said.

"How?" I asked.

"I tell you what we do," he went on, eagerly. "Some evening soon you will again show the pictures? . . . Good! Well, I will say to my people, 'Mr. Forrest will show the new scenes he has been making with you. Do you wish to see them?' And they will say, 'Yes.' 'Very well, my children,' I will say; 'those who wish to go may do so. I shall have my concert on this evening, but no matter; I wish you to do as you like. You shall see the pictures if that pleases you better, and I shall sing and play for myself.'"

I at once realized the danger of this plan; but I tried not to show my alarm.

"Herr Müller," I said, "we should have not one spectator at our picture show."

"*Gewiss!*" he said, laughing delightedly. "I believe that, too, so much they love the music."

"Then why prove what we both already know?"

"To make a little more sure. We have this wonderful chance; never again, perhaps, will it happen, anywhere. There are ignorant men, Mr. Forrest, who think these island people are savages who care only to eat and sleep. We know how wrong is their idea; and you can say, after you leave my island, when you hear their foolish talk, 'But let me tell you what I *know*.'"

There was no dissuading him. I tried in every possible way, only to increase his enthusiasm for the plan. He pressed me to set an evening for the double attraction. I delayed day after day, made excuse after excuse until further ones would not serve. He was not to be turned from his purpose, and at last I was compelled to comply. I had a possible resource in Otto. Although we had never spoken of the native attitude toward his father's music, I knew how he felt about it in his heart: that it was both fear and love that compelled attendance at the weekly concerts. I told him that he must warn the people, secretly, not to come to the studio on that evening, promising them another showing of pictures the following night.

Otto shook his head. "My father would be sure to hear of it, Mr. Forrest, and he would be very angry. He would think you did not believe in the love of our people for his music, and wished to save him from being disappointed. He is a proud man; he would never forgive you for that. No, there is nothing we can do. It must be as he wishes."

## X

I made my preparations with a heavy heart. My hope was that the people would not take him at his word, or that a sense of loyalty to him would prevent their attendance. That hope soon faded. They came in twos and threes, in family groups, the girls and young men, the middle-aged. Only the Müller children and a few of the old people were missing; otherwise all the natives

were seated on the ground before the screen, eagerly waiting for us to begin. If they were at all worried as to what Herr Müller would think, it was not apparent in their manner. For the moment, at least, they seemed to have quite forgotten him. At another time I should have enjoyed the animation of that scene, but my heart was with Herr Müller. I recalled his words: "On that evening, Mr. Forrest, I shall have a great emotion, a very great emotion. I shall sing as never before." I dared not think of the great empty square before his house. But the harm was done, now. There was nothing for it but to proceed with our show.

Crossland was at the camera; I had sent Zimmerman to attend the concert. I remained at the studio only long enough to inspect one bit of film I had been particularly anxious to see; then I set out for the village as fast as I could walk. We had the same wildly appreciative audience. I could hear their shouts of delight long after I had left the studio.

Herr Müller was singing when I arrived; the song was "Heilige Nacht." It was only then that I remembered we were in Christmas week; there were no seasonable reminders at Marutea. I forgot the tropics as I listened to that timeless old song. I had never before heard it sung by a man; I didn't suppose that it could be. Now I know that only a man—if he be German, with the voice of a Müller—can sing it as it should be sung. It was lovely, unspeakably so. It seemed to me that I was hearing it for the first time. As I listened I forgot time and place and all my anxieties.

When it was finished I came back with an effort to the little world of Marutea lost in the wastes of the Pacific. The great square before Herr Müller's house was all but empty. The Müller children were present, and a dozen or fifteen of the old people. All applauded heartily, and I clapped till the palms of my hands burned; but the effect, in volume, was nothing compared to what was customary at these concerts. Herr Müller rose and bowed, but he seemed scarcely aware of our presence at the moment. He was deeply stirred; the spell he had cast upon one, at least, of his audience was upon him as well.

I sought out Zimmerman immediately. In a rapidly whispered conference he told me that Herr Müller had given no indication that he was aware of the smallness of his audience. As a matter of fact, they had spread themselves over a wide area in an effort to make their numbers appear much larger than they were. That was Otto's doing, undoubtedly. The moon was again in its second quarter and the light fell in pools and splashes among the trees. It would have been easy for Herr Müller to be deceived as to the numbers of his audience, the more so because his eyes were accustomed to the brilliant light from his vapor lamp. I tried to persuade myself that he was deceived. Believing that the situation might yet be saved, I asked Zimmerman to hurry back to the studio and stop our performance, telling the people to come at once to the concert. However, thinking of the distance, I was apprehensive. Twenty minutes at least would pass before any of them could appear.

Meanwhile, Herr Müller proceeded with the concert. He sang next one of Heine's lyrics set to music by himself. It was as fragrant of a northern spring as an apple tree in blossom. I tell you, the man *was* a genius! I could easily imagine him in Carnegie Hall in New York, the place filled with sophisticated music lovers, and every one of them deeply moved, as the human heart will always be moved by simple and beautiful things. Again I applauded like a dozen men, and so did the others. The applause was genuine, too; at least mine was. A tenderness welled up in my heart, a deep longing to please the fine old fellow; to make good to him, somehow, all his years of loneliness, of homesickness, of unrealized dreams. This time he did not rise from his stool; he seemed to be in a deep reverie. Then he played the "Moonlight Sonata."

Ghosts of old memories, of places, people, evoked by associations the music had for me, came thronging back. It was strange indeed to think that there could be no such memories for the others of that tiny gathering. I thought: "Never shall I forget this! Never! From this night on, the 'Moonlight Sonata' will mean Marutea to me." And so it does; so it always will. If ever my memories of the island grow dim, I shall know how to conjure up again all its loneliness and beauty.

Of a sudden the music was broken off, in the middle of a bar. I looked up quickly. Herr Müller had risen from his stool. He came to the verandah railing and stood looking down at us. Then, in a low dead voice, he said, "Go home. I shall play no more"; and, without waiting to see his command obeyed, he disappeared through a doorway.

## XI

The little gathering dispersed; they seemed to float away rather than to walk. There were a dozen Müller children, married and unmarried, from the ages of forty-odd to eighteen. Two of the younger ones lived with their father; the others had homes of their own near by. They stood for a moment, conversing in whispers, looking toward the house. The intense white light from the vapor lamp seemed to spill like water over the piano keys to the floor, and the instrument cast a block of impenetrable shadow on the other side. I felt suddenly weary, emptied of the desire or the capacity for thought. I rose and made my way slowly to the beach, walking on for a hundred yards or so; there I sat down facing the lagoon, with my back to a tree. A few moments later I saw someone approaching. It was Otto. He sat down beside me. Presently he said, "He is in his bedroom, Mr. Forrest, walking up and down. I am afraid when he is like this."

"What do you think we should do, Otto?"

"Nothing. We must wait and see."

From far down the beach we heard a murmur of voices. The people were returning from our picture show. Otto hurried along to meet them, to tell

them to go very quietly to their houses. They separated in silence among the groves; those who lived on the farther side of the village kept to the beach as they passed Herr Müller's house. Within five minutes the last of them had gone.

It was useless to think of sleep. Otto and I wandered away from the house and back to it half a dozen times during the next two hours. The vapor lamp still burned. We were like moths attracted to it again and again.

It must have been well after midnight that we came for the last time, standing in the deep shade, waiting, listening, hearing nothing. We were about to move away for another quarter of an hour of aimless wandering when the curtains at one of the doorways parted and Herr Müller came out. His movements were like those of a sleepwalker. He sat down on the piano stool with his back to the instrument, his elbows on his knees, his chin resting in his hands. He remained motionless for a long time. Suddenly he turned to the piano, squaring his shoulders proudly. I could not see his face, only his magnificent head with its mass of thick snow-white hair, clearly outlined in the brilliant light of the lamp. He let his hands fall lightly on the keys, striking a chord that I can hear to this day. The music of the mingled notes had in it a quality of unutterable loneliness; it was as though some desolate spirit of mid-ocean had uttered a cry of profound despair.

That was all—a single chord. Silence flowed in again; I could hear the faint hiss of the vapor lamp. We waited, and I was hoping that he would play, finding an outlet in music for whatever emotion gripped him. Instead of that, he sprang from the stool with an inarticulate cry that froze my blood. He disappeared within doors and returned with an axe in his hand.

How am I to describe what happened next? Have you ever seen and heard a piano being murdered? I am not speaking of piano music done to death by a novice. No—of the instrument itself, beaten, chopped, hacked, splintered, mangled, with an axe wielded by a man with the strength of a giant and the demoniac passion of . . . of nothing human. I doubt whether such a thing had ever happened before, anywhere in the world. With all his enormous strength he swung the axe again, and again, and again, and again—first on the keyboard, then on the beautiful body of the piano whose wood had been so permeated, so mellowed with music through the years. It was as though one were watching a god, who had created order and beauty and harmony, seized of a sudden by the horrible need to destroy all that he had won from chaos and night, himself with it. I leave you to imagine, if you can, the tortured cries that came from the instrument at each blow.

How long its agony lasted I do not know—possibly two or three minutes, though the time seemed endless to me. Then Herr Müller hurled the axe away from him. It flew far out, whirling round and round, and fell not a dozen paces from where Otto and I were standing. When I looked again toward the verandah, Herr Müller had crouched behind what was left of the instrument. The mangled corpse of it was heaved up on two legs, and it was

hurled rather than pushed across the verandah. The railings splintered like matchwood at the impact, and the instrument fell with a rending crash to the ground, fifteen feet below.

Otto and I had stood deprived of the power of thought or movement by the horror of what we saw. Now he cried out, "Oh, Mr. Forrest! To-morrow! To-morrow!" I knew what he meant.

But there was to be no to-morrow for his father. He was mercifully spared the anguish he would have known at the realization of what he had done. He swayed for a second or two at the very edge of the verandah, outlined in silhouette against the light of the vapor lamp. Suddenly he raised his hands to his head, staggered back two or three paces, and fell.

Regaining our power of action, Otto and I ran to the outdoor stairway at the end of the verandah, but we were not the first to reach him. He was lying as he had fallen, but his head was resting in the lap of a lovely old lady who I knew at once must be Mrs. Müller, although I had never seen her before. She paid no attention to us; she was not aware of our presence. She was seated cross-legged on the floor, running her slim brown fingers through his hair. His face looked as peaceful as that of a child asleep.

*"Aué! Aué! Otto iti é! Aué! Aué!"*

I shall never be able to forget that little wailing cry, so tender, so infinitely melancholy, repeated over and over again. "Alas! Alas!" Words other than those were useless. There was nothing more to be said.

He must have burst a blood vessel in his brain. However that may be, he was dead. I remained in the house only long enough to be certain of this. The place was now filling with people; I was neither wanted nor needed there. I made my way down the stairs and through the throng gathered outside, to the beach.

The director of motion pictures ended his story at this point. No one spoke for a moment or two; then someone asked, in a tentative, apologetic voice: "You finished the picture?"

"Yes," he replied, rising. "I was obliged to do that."

## A LIFE IN THE DAY OF A WRITER

*Tess Slesinger (1935)*

O SHINING stupor, O glowing idiocy, O crowded vacuum, O privileged pregnancy, he prayed, morosely pounding X's on his typewriter, I am a writer if I never write another line, I am alive if I never step out of this room again; Christ oh Christ, the problem is not to stretch a feeling, it is to reduce a feeling, *all* feeling, all thought, all ecstasy, tangled and tumbled in the empty crowded head of a writer, to one clear sentence, one clear form, and

still preserve the hugeness, the hurtfulness, the enormity, the unbearable all-at-once-ness, of being alive and knowing it too . . .

He had been at it for three hours, an elbow planted on either side of his deaf-mute typewriter, staring like a passionate moron round the walls that framed his life—for a whole night had passed, he had nothing or everything to say, and he awoke each morning in terror of his typewriter until he had roused it and used it and mastered it, he was always afraid it might be dead forever—when the *telephone* screamed like an angry siren across his nerves. It was like being startled out of sleep; like being caught making faces at yourself in the mirror—by an editor or a book critic; like being called to account again by your wife. His hand on the telephone, a million short miles in time and space from his writing desk, he discovered that he was shaking. He had spoken to no one all the morning since Louise—shouting that she could put up with being the wife of a non-best-seller, or even the wife of a chronic drunk with a fetich for carrying away coat hangers for souvenirs, but not by God the duenna of a conceited, adolescent flirt—had slammed the door and gone off cursing to her office. Voices are a proof of life, he explained gently to the angry telephone, and I have not for three hours heard my own; supposing I have lost it? Courage, my self! he said, as he stupidly lifted the receiver and started when nothing pumped out at him. All at once he heard his own voice, unnaturally loud, a little hoarse. "I WISH TO REPORT A FIRE," he wanted to say, but he said instead, roaring it: "HELLO." The answering *Hello, sunshine*, came from an immeasurable distance, from America perhaps, or the twentieth century—a rescue party! but he had grown, in three long hours, so used to his solitary island! And though he was a writer and said to be gifted with a fine imagination, it was beyond his uttermost power to imagine that this voice addressing him was really a voice, that since it was a voice it must belong to a person, especially to the person identifying herself as Louise.

"Ho, Louise!" he said, going through with it for the purpose of establishing his sanity, at least in her ears if not actually in his own: he spoke courteously as though her voice were a voice, as though it did belong to her, as though she really were his wife; "now darling, don't go on with—" But then he discovered that she was not going on with anything but being a wife, a voice, an instrument of irrelevant torture. *How goes the work?* she said kindly. What in hell did she think he was, a half-witted baby playing with paper-dolls? "Oh, fine, just fine," he answered deprecatingly. (I'm a writer if I never write another line, he said fiercely to his typewriter, which burst out laughing.) *Well look*, she was saying, *Freddie called up* (who in hell was Freddie?) and then her voice went on, making explanations, and it seemed that he was to put away his paper-dolls and meet her at five at Freddie's, because Freddie was giving a cocktail party. "Cocktail party," he said obediently; "wife, five." Cocktail party, eh—and a dim bell sounded in his brain, for he remembered cocktail parties from some other world, the world of yes-

terday; a cocktail party meant reprieve from typewriters, rescue from desert islands; and it might also mean Betsey—he cocked a debonair eye at his typewriter to see if it was jealous—Betsey, who, along with half a dozen coat hangers, had been the cause of this morning's quarrel! *Yes, your wife for a change, came the off-stage tinkle over the telephone again; and you might try taking her home for a change too, instead of someone else's—and by the way, my treasure, don't bring those coat hangers with you; Freddie has plenty of his own.* "Right you are, my pet," he said, feeling smart and cheap and ordinary again, "right you are, my lamb-pie, my song of songs, ace of spades, queen of hearts, capital of Wisconsin, darling of the Vienna press—" But she had got off somewhere about Wisconsin.

He looked, a little self-conscious, about his now twice-empty room; aha, my prison, my lonely four-walled island, someone has seen the smoke from my fire at last, someone has spied the waving of my shirt-tails; at five o'clock today, he said, thumbing his nose at his typewriter, the rescue plane will swoop down to pick me up, see, and for all you know, my black-faced Underwood, my noiseless, portable, publisher's stooge, my conscience, my slave, my master, my mistress—for all you know it may lead to that elegant creature Betsey, whom my rather plump Louise considers a bit too much on the thin side . . . ah, but my good wife is a bit short-sighted there; she doesn't look on the *other* side, the bright side, the sunny side, the side that boasts the little, hidden ripples that it takes imagination, courage, to express; the little hidden ripples that the male eye can't stop looking for. . . .

He seated himself again before his typewriter, like an embarrassed school-boy.

Black anger descended upon him. It was easy enough for her, for Louise, to put out a hand to her telephone where it sat waiting on her office desk, and ring him up and order him to report at a cocktail party—Louise, who sat in a room all day surrounded matter-of-factly by people and their voices and her own voice. But for him it was gravely another matter. Her ring summoned him out of his own world—what if he hadn't written a line all morning except a complicated series of coat-hanger designs in the shape of X's?—and because he couldn't really make the crossing, it left him feeling a little ashamed, a little found-out, caught with his pants down, so to speak—and a little terrified too, to be reminded again that he was not "like other people." He was still shaking. She had no right, damn it, no damn right, to disturb him with that sharp malicious ringing, to present him with the bugbear, the insult, the indignity, of a cocktail party—she, who was proud enough of him in public (Bertram Kyle, author of *Fifty Thousand Lives*, that rather brilliant book), although at home she was inclined to regard him, as his family had when he refused to study banking, as something of a sissy.

Still, when you have accepted an invitation to a party for the afternoon, you have that to think about, to hold over your typewriter's head, you can think of how you will look it up at half-past four and shave and shower and



go out with a collar and a tie around your neck to show people that you can look, talk, drink, like any of them, like the worst of them. But a party! Christ, the faces, the crowds of white faces (like the white keys of the typewriter I had before you, my fine Underwood), and worst of all, the voices. . . . The party became abnormally enlarged in his mind, as though it would take every ounce of ingenious conniving—not to speak of courage!—to get to it at all; and as he fell face downward on his typewriter he gave more thought to the party than even the party's host was likely to do, Freddie, whoever the devil "Freddie" was.

Oh degrading torture, lying on the smug reproachful keys with nothing to convey to them. He remembered how he had once been afraid of every woman he met until he kissed her, beat her, held her captive in his arms; but this typewriter was a thing to master every day, it was a virgin every morning. If I were Thomas Wolfe, he thought, I should start right off: Oh country of my birth and land I have left behind me, what can I, a youth with insatiable appetite, do to express what there is in me of everlasting hunger, loneliness, nakedness, a hunger that feeds upon hunger and a loneliness that grows in proportion to the hours I lend to strangers . . . If I were Saroyan I should not hesitate either: But I am young, young and hungry (thank God), and why must I listen to the rules the old men make or the rich ones, this is not a story, it is a life, a simple setting down in words of what I see of men upon this earth. No, no, I am not Saroyan (thank God), I am not Thomas Wolfe either, and I am also not Louise's boss (ah, *there's* a man!). And I cannot write an essay; I am a natural liar, I prefer a jumbled order to chronology, and poetry to logic; I don't like facts, I like to imagine their implications. Oh, to get back, get back, to the pre-telephone stupor, the happy mingled pregnancy, the clear confusion of myself only with myself . . .

And so Bertram Kyle opened up his notebooks. He felt again that the story he had outlined so clearly there, of the "lousy guy" who everyone thought was lousy including himself, but who was so only because of a simple happening in his childhood, might be a fine story; but it was one he could not do today. Nor could he do the story (which had occurred to him on a train to Washington) of the old lady, prospective grandmother, who went mad thinking it was her own child to be born. Nor could he do the story—partly because he did not know it yet—which would begin: "He lived alone with a wife who had died and two children who had left him." Perhaps, he thought bitterly, he could never do those stories, for in the eagerness of begetting them he had told them to Louise; too often when he told her a story it was finished then, it was dead, like killing his lust by confiding an infidelity.

And so, desperately, he turned to those thoughtful little flaps in the backs of his notebooks; into which he poured the findings in his pockets each night; out came old menus, the torn-off backs of match books, hotel stationery that he had begged of waiters, ticket-stubs, a time-table, a theatre program, and odd unrecognizable scraps of paper he had picked up anywhere. The writ-

ing on these was born of drinking sometimes; of loneliness in the midst of laughing people; of a need to assert himself, perhaps, a desire to remind himself—that he was a writer; but more than anything, he thought, for the sheer love of grasping a pencil and scratching with it on a scrap of paper. “If I were a blind man I should carry a typewriter before me on a tray suspended from my neck by two blue ribbons; I think I *am* blind”—he had written that on a tablecloth once, and Louise was very bored.

“It is always later than you think, said the sundial finding itself in the shade”—from the back of an old match box, and undoubtedly the relic of an evening on which he had strained to be smart. A night-club menu: “Dear Saroyan: But take a day off from your writing, *mon vieux*, or your writing will get to be a habit . . .” Another menu—and he remembered the evening well, he could still recall the look of tolerance growing into anger on Louise’s face as he wrote and wrote and went on writing: “Nostalgia, a nostalgia for all the other nostalgic nights on which nothing would suffice . . . a thing of boredom, of content, of restlessness, *velleities*, in which the sweetness of another person is irrelevant and intolerable, and indifference or even cruelty hurts in the same way . . . linking up with the gray days in childhood when among bewilderingly many things to do one wanted to do none of them, and gray evenings with Louise when everything of the adult gamut of things to do would be the same thing . . .” (At that point Louise had reached down to her anger and said, “All right, sunshine, we come to a place I loathe because you like to see naked women and then, when they come on, you don’t even watch them; I wouldn’t complain if you were Harold Bell Wright or something . . .”) “In order to make friends,” he discovered from another match box, “one need not talk seriously, any more than one needs to make love in French”—and that, he recalled tenderly, was plagiarized from a letter he had written to a very young girl, Betsey’s predecessor in his fringe flirtations. “A man’s underlying motives are made up of his thwarted, or unrealized, ambitions.” “The war between men and women consists of left-overs from their unsatisfactory mating.” “But the blinking of the eye”—this on a concert program—“must go on; perhaps one catches the half-face of the player and sees, despite the frenzied waving of his head, a thing smaller than his playing but perhaps the important, the vital thing: like the heart-beat, at once greater and smaller than the thing it accompanies . . .” “We are not so honest as the best of our writing, for to be wholly honest is to be brave, braver than any of us dares to be with another human being, especially with a woman.” “*At bottom one is really grave.*”

He was pulled up short by that last sentence, which was the only one of the lot that made sense. “*At bottom one is really grave.*”

Suddenly he raised his head and stared wildly round the room. He was terrified, he was elated. Here was his whole life, in these four walls. This year he had a large room with a very high ceiling; he works better in a big room, Louise told people who came in. Last year he had worked in a very small

room with a low ceiling; he works better, Louise used to tell people, in a small place. He worked better at night, he worked better in the daytime, he worked better in the country, better in the city, in the winter, in the summer . . . But he was frightened. Here he was all alone with his life until five o'clock in the afternoon. Other people (Louise) went out in the morning, left their life behind them somewhere, or else filed it away in offices and desks; he imagined that Louise only remembered her life and took it up again in the late afternoon when she said good night to her boss and started off for home—or a cocktail party. But he had to live with his life, and work with it; he couldn't leave it alone and it couldn't leave him alone, not for a minute—except when he was drunk, and that, he said, smugly surveying the scattered coat-hangers, relic of last night's debauch, that is why a writer drinks so much. Hell, he thought proudly, I'm living a life, my own whole life, right there in this room each day; I can still feel the pain I felt last night when I was living part of it and Louise said . . . and I can still feel the joy I felt last week when Betsey said . . . and I can feel the numbness and the excitement of too many scotch-and-sodas, of too perfect dancing, of too many smooth-faced, slick-haired women; I can remember saying "*Listen—listen* to anyone who would or would not, and the truth of it is I had nothing to say anyway because I had too much to say . . . Hell, he thought, my coat-hangers lie on the floor where I flung them at three this morning when Louise persuaded me that it was better not to sleep in my clothes again, I have not hung up my black suit, I have not emptied yesterday's waste-basket nor last week's ash-trays (nor my head of its thirty years' fine accumulation) . . . everything in my room and in my head is testimony to the one important fact that I am alive, alive as hell, and all I have to do is wait till the whole reeling sum of things adds itself up or boils itself down, to a story . . .

There seemed now to be hunger in his belly, and it was a fact that he had not eaten since breakfast and then only of Louise's anger. But the turmoil in his insides was not, he felt, pure hunger. It came from sitting plunged in symbols of his life, it came because he did not merely have to live with his life each day, but he had to give birth to it over again every morning. Of course, he thought with a fierce joy, I am hungry. I am ravenously hungry, and I have no appetite, I am parched but I am not thirsty, I am dead tired and wide awake and passionately, violently alive.

But he lifted his elbows now from his typewriter, he looked straight before him, and he could feel between his eyes a curious knot, not pain exactly, but tension, as though all of him were focussed on the forefront of his brain, as though his head were a packed box wanting to burst. It was for this moment that, thirty years before, he had been born; for this moment that he had tossed peanuts to an elephant when he was a child; that he had by a miracle escaped pneumonia, dropping from an airplane, death by drowning, concussion from football accidents; that he had fallen desperately and permanently in love with a woman in a yellow hat whose car had been held up by traffic,

and whom he never saw again; that he had paused at sight of the blue in Chartres Cathedral and wept, and a moment later slapped angrily at a mosquito, that he had met and married Louise, met and coveted Kitty Braithwaite, Margery, Connie, Sylvia, Elinor, Betsey; for this moment that he had been born and lived, for this moment that he was being born again.

His fingers grew light. The room was changing. Everything in it was integrating; pieces of his life came together like the odd-shaped bits of a puzzle-map, forming a pattern as one assembles fruits and flowers for a still-life. Listen, there is a name, Bettina Gregory. Bettina is a thin girl, wiry, her curves so slight as to be ripples, so hidden that the male eye cannot stop searching for them; she drinks too much; she is nicer when she is sober, a little shy, but less approachable. Bettina Gregory. She is the kind of girl who almost cares about changing the social order, almost cares about people, almost is *at bottom really grave*. She is the kind of girl who would be at a cocktail party when someone named Fr—named Gerry—would call up and say he couldn't come because he was prosecuting a taxi-driver who had robbed him of four dollars. She is the kind of girl who would then toss off another drink and think it funny to take old Carl along up to the night court to watch old Gerry prosecute a taxi-man. She is the kind of girl who will somehow collect coat hangers (I give you my coat hangers, Betsey-Bettina, Bertram Kyle almost shouted in his joy)—and who will then go lilting and looping into the night court armed to the teeth with coat hangers and defense mechanisms, who will mock at the whores that have been rounded up, leer at the taxi-driver, ogle the red-faced detective, mimic the rather sheepish Gerry—all the time mocking, leering, ogling, mimicking—nothing but herself. Frankly we are just three people, she explains to the detective, with an arm about Gerry and Carl, who love each other veddy, veddy much. She must pretend to be drunker than she is, because she is bitterly and deeply ashamed; she must wave with her coat hangers and put on a show because she knows it is a rotten show and she cannot stop it. It is not merely the liquor she has drunk; it is the wrong books she has read, the Noel Coward plays she has gone to, the fact that there is a drought in the Middle West, that there was a war when she was a child, that there will be another when she has a child, that she and Carl have something between them but it is not enough, that she is sorry for the taxi-driver and ashamed of being sorry, that *at bottom she is almost grave*. In the end, Bertram Kyle said to anybody or nobody, in the end I think . . .

But there was no reason any more to think. His fingers were clicking, clicking, somehow it developed that Gerry had muddled things because he was drunk, so that the taxi-man must go to jail pending special sessions, and then Bettina and Gerry and Carl take the detective out to a bar some place; explaining frankly to waiters that they are just four people who love each other veddy, veddy much . . . and, perhaps because they all hate themselves

so veddy, veddy much, Carl and Gerry let Bettina carry them all off in her car for a three-day spree, which means that Gerry misses the subpoena and the taxi-driver spends a week in jail, earning himself a fine prison-record because he stole four dollars to which Carl and Gerry and Bettina think him wholly and earnestly entitled, and perhaps in the end they give the four dollars to the Communist Party, or perhaps they just buy another round of drinks, or perhaps they throw it in the river, or perhaps they frankly throw themselves . . .

And is this all, Bertram Kyle, all that will come out today of your living a life by yourself, of your having been born thirty years ago and tossed peanuts to elephants, wept at the Chartres window, slapped at mosquitoes, survived the hells and heavens of adolescence to be born again, today—is this all, this one short story which leaves out so much of life? But neither can a painter crowd all the world's rivers and mountains and railroad tracks onto one canvas, yet if his picture is any good at all it is good because he has seen those rivers and mountains and puts down all that he knows and all that he has felt about them, even if his painting is of a bowl of flowers and a curtain . . . And here, thought that thin layer of consciousness which went on as an undercurrent to his fingers' steady tapping, here is my lust for Betsey, my repentance for Louise, my endless gratitude to the woman who wore a yellow hat, my defeatism, my optimism, the fact that I was born when I was, all of my last night's living and much that has gone before . . .

The room grew clouded with the late afternoon and the cigarettes that he forgot to smoke. His fingers went faster, they ached like the limbs of a tired lover and they wove with delicacy and precision because the story had grown so real to him that it was physical. He knew that his shoulders were hunched, that his feet were cramped, that if he turned his desk about he would have a better light—but all the time he was tearing out sheet after sheet and with an odd accuracy that was not his own at any other time, inserting the next ones with rapidity and ease, he typed almost perfectly, he made few mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or the choice of words, and he swung into a rhythm that was at once uniquely his and yet quite new to him.

Now each idea as he pounded it out on his flying-machine gave birth to three others, and he had to lean over and make little notes with a pencil on little pieces of paper that later on he would figure out and add together and stick in all the gaping stretches of his story. He rediscovered the miracle of something on page twelve tying up with something on page seven which he had not understood when he wrote it, the miracle of watching a shapeless thing come out and in the very act of coming take its own inevitable shape. He could feel his story growing out of the front of his head, under his moving fingers, beneath his searching eyes . . . his heart was beating as fast as the keys of his typewriter, he wished that his typewriter were also an easel, a violin, a sculptor's tools, a boat he could sail, a plane he could fly, a woman he could love, he wished it were something he could not only bend over in

his passion but lift in his exultation, he wished it could sing for him and paint for him and breathe for him.

And all at once his head swims, he is in a fog, sitting is no longer endurable to him, and he must get up, blind, not looking at his words, and walk about the room, the big room, the small room, whether it is night or day or summer or winter, he must get up and walk it off . . . *Listen, non-writers, I am not boasting when I tell you that writing is not a sublimation of living, but living is a pretty feeble substitute for art. Listen, non-writers, this is passion. I am trembling, I am weak, I am strong, pardon me a moment while I go and make love to the world, it may be indecent, it may be mad—but as I stalk about the room now I am not a man and I am not a woman, I am Bettina Gregory and Gerry and the taxi-driver and all the whores and cops and stooges in the night court, I am every one of the keys of my typewriter, I am the clean white pages and the word-sprawled used ones, I am the sunlight on my own walls—rip off your dress, life, tear off your clothes, world, let me come closer; for listen: I am a sated, tired, happy writer, and I have to make love to the world.*

Sometimes it was night when this happened and then he must go to bed because even a writer needs sleep, but at those times he went to bed and then lay there stark and wide awake with plots weaving like tunes in his head and characters leaping like mad chess-men, and words, words and their miraculous combinations, floating about on the ceiling above him and burying themselves in the pillow beneath him till he thought that he would never sleep and knew that he was mad . . . till Louise sometimes cried out that she could not sleep beside him, knowing him to be lying there only on sufferance, twitching with his limbs like a madman in the dark . . .

Louise! For it was not night, it was late afternoon, with the dark of coming night stealing in to remind him, to remind him that if he were ever again to make the break from his life's world back to sanity, back to normalcy and Louise, he must make it now, while he remembered to; he must leave this room, stale with his much-lived life, his weary typewriter, he must shake off his ecstasy and his bewilderment, his passion, his love; his hate, his glorious rebirth and his sated daily death—and go to meet Louise; go to a cocktail party . . .

He was shocked and terrified when he met his own face in the mirror because it was not a face, it was a pair of haggard, gleaming eyes, and because like Rip Van Winkle he seemed to have grown heavy with age and yet light with a terrible youth. He managed somehow to get by without letting the elevator man know that he was crazy, that he was afraid of him because he was a face and a voice, because he seemed to be looking at him queerly. On the street Bettina appeared and walked beside him, waving her drunken coat-hangers and announcing "Frankly there is nothing like a coat-hanger," while Gerry leaned across him rather bitterly to say, "if I hear you say frankly again, Bettina, frankly I shall kill you." But they walked along, all of them,

very gay and friendly, despite the taxi-driver's slight hostility, and then at the corner they were joined by Carl with the detective's arm about him, and Carl was saying to anybody and nobody that they passed—"Frankly we are veddy, veddy mad." And they came at last to Freddie's house, and there Bertram Kyle stood for a moment, deserted by Bettina and Carl and Gerry—even the detective was gone—hiding behind a collar and a tie and frankly panic-stricken. The door opens, he enters mechanically—good God, it is a massacre, a revolution, is it the night court, a nightmare? . . .

But he pushed in very bravely and began to reel toward all his friends. "Hello, I'm cock-eyed!" he roared at random. "Hell, I've been floating for forty days, where's a coat-hanger, Freddie, frankly, if there's anything I'm nuts about it's coat-hangers, and frankly have you seen my friends, some people I asked along, Bettina Gregory, Gerry, and a detective?" He saw Louise, ominous and tolerant, placing her hands in disgust on her soft hips at sight of him. Frankly, he shouted at her, frankly, "Louise, I am just three or four people who love you veddy veddy much, and where's a drink, my pearl, my pet, my bird, my cage, my night court, my nightmare—for frankly I need a little drink to sober down . . ."

## TRUE BELIEVER

*Madge Jenison (1938)*

SHE WAS a peasant woman living a mile out of Arles to the northwest. She was sixty years old. She had married, had children. She was of middle height, her bones showing everywhere in her frame. Her enormous hands and feet seemed points at which she was held to the earth, as the roots of a tree hold by their pull. She lived alone on a farm of five fields in a house of the country, of rubble and stone whitewashed. On the windward side a row of cypress trees stood against the mistral. The red-tiled roof of faded pink that was rose and orange that was rose took in the light because the tiles were grooved, purple, green, and red. Her husband had left her five years before. He had gone away on a wagon passing their lane and she had never heard of him since. Everything on the farm was a muddle and failure when he went, and she had brought order and honor into it. She had cleaned up and husbanded it field by field, fence by fence, season by season.

When her husband left she was without money and so she went to clean at a big house in Arles. The cook told her of some talk the butler brought down from the table. She meditated on what this woman said and she had begun to raise very choice truffles which had before been only hunted in the forest by dogs trained to nose them out. She made excellent cheese and rye bread, the native brandy, and a conserve of lemon. She made the special wine of the country of pale rose—vin rosé—a first pressing with great flavor of

the grape. She kept goats and geese and had a good breed of French poultry. She had bought a cow. A cow was a rarity in the district, and she had an assured and lavish public for her butter.

Fine people had begun to come in to the Provence, establishing themselves on the old neighborhood properties, and much money was being spent. She took to the great houses in her cart her bottles and pots, grapes laid between damp leaves, green almonds, figs, and a full-bodied fragrant apricot which grew on espaliers on the south walls of her house and barn. She took everything late in the afternoon, so that her wares went almost from her vines and furrows to the tables of her customers.

She was very solitary. Her husband had brutalized her sons, and as soon as each was old enough he had gone away. She seemed to be an abstraction of woman, as if it were probable that hers was a character of only two or three masses, with only two or three shapes within it—day night, work sleep, sowing harvest, order disorder, clean not clean. She did only two or three things; and she thought only two or three things—to sow, reap, store, and prosper. In the mornings she would stake her herd of goats out in the open country and go after them at evening. All day she went from field to field, trellis to trellis, alone against the landscape. At night she drank big bowls of goat's milk or soup and ate hunks of black bread and went to bed.

All the marked events of this woman's life were part of the earth. She had a relation to the great logical and organic nature of matter, by which peat goes over into carbon, carbon into diamond, children are born, and the soil opens and yields. Her life was on a planetary scale where the landscape, made of sky, the earth fat with oils strong and fierce, the mistral, the river, were the events. She was not outside all that but part of the great thing, as if she were only blocked from it and not yet wholly emerged.

The Rhone, very shallow here, rushes up the earth and carries down boulders, so that the whole of the wild, white Camargue is coated with rubble for thirty miles and rotten with rock. The unfenced tremendous stony plain, the huge scene desolate, bold and grand, with salty plants that grow low over it, were something to which she was related as on the mother's side. Standing in the middle of a field, sometimes with arms folded across her breast, looking about, she did not exactly worship but she had a bodily sense of what was there around her, as if she passed her hand over the entire universe. Of all the year the strong cold winter evenings were the time she liked the best. This is the time when the ground makes its liquors. The spring was just under there. It was not gone but was ready to issue again. A little warmth, a tilt of some cup, it would come up through the ground along the roots, in fire. When she went with her lantern to break the ice in the pond for the geese to get their water, as the winter dusk came on, she partook of something, and made obeisance, and received a vision.

Along the north end of her home pasture there was a rolling slope of land. The road to Arles curved here round this low hill and a clump of



lombardies. This roll of the earth and bend of road and clump of trees was something she liked—the way the lombardies bent in the wind and went into a repeat forming one whole with her field and the road. She often looked at this place. It was not a slope, nor a bend alone. There was something firm and heavy here that she wanted. Her eye would run along it and she would seem to lay her arm down on it and fit it into her elbow. She did not merely look at this place. It involved her. Solidity was always something in which she was involved. She dreamed one night that she had hands so big that she could reach out and they would cover the hills.

She owned from Bella, the cow she had bought, a herd of four. Her cattle had for her something the earth, the sky, and river did not hold. She would take a variety of connections with a cow, its hulk and stoniness, so much to hang on, projections. When the herd moved away from you, as they would step together in a line, they were a single flow, and she noticed that always. As they wound slowly down in the winter afternoons, into the long whitewashed barn with bulging roof and windows under the eaves and the dovecote on top, with each little bell making a pattern, she saw them in great triangular blocks. Striding after them and lifting the big buckets of water for them, some natureness and some bulk enclosed in the bony body of a cow was perfectly clear to her. Without words, passing her hand across the back of her neck, she comprehended it and partook of it. Little calves and colts, in spite of their tiny unsteady legs, were now what they would become to her—they were power in the large. They could get up and walk away almost as soon as they were born. She always stopped to watch the wild Camargue horses, those stallions running free like flames, flying over the hills against the so-joyous blue sky. They were part of what she knew. She went when she was able to the Crau to see the polished black bulls raised there for the bullfights.

There was something else. When she walked into Arles to church, before she went into the ancient Romanesque cathedral, she would stand close to the sides of the porch, looking up at spaces covered by scenes from the Bible. They were not stories to her of Jezebel, Tobit, the kiss of Judas, the people of Israel crossing the Red Sea. They were not stories nor stones. The way they came out of the wall arrested her. Heights and depths in seeing the world she knew. But these were higher and deeper by some trick that was left on her eyeballs. She always stopped before the panels which divided the Evangelists from the Saints, and looked along the friezes, tier on tier of shape, volume laid against volume, reason against reason. Over St. Andrew three horses' heads were pressed close before one another solidly, and she always lingered at this detail of the portal.

She had scarcely any relation to Jesus or Mary. But her relation to the portal was active, heavy, and concrete. When she went in and took the sacrament it was really the portal she was taking. Before the eyes of her bowed head, into that kneeling woman came not the blood of the Pascal Lamb, but

the richness of the nature of form of three horses flying before a mistral of 1086. In fact, she liked the cathedral best when there was no service, and she could consider undistracted, if such a word may be used, what she saw. Sometimes she walked in the cloisters or along the boulevard of Roman or Merovingian tombs. She had a natural relation to what men far away in the first, sixth, and eleventh centuries had taken from that stone and left there. They had been part of the church they had made, and she too was an actual integral part of it as she stood there, as much as one of its own shadows.

She thought with her body, and would stand close to the figure or vine she liked best on the baptismal font or the cornice. She would touch what she could reach and run her thumb along it. She liked shapes. Touch was what made reality to her. The world was a thing you touched. She had touched her children. She had put her hand on her baby's head to feel the way the hair grows, and on Bella's nozzle to feel the way the fur went in two directions. She would take up her lemons and onions and roll them in her hand. She knew that they were round far more than she knew that they were sour or savory. They were real by her standard not by their color and taste but when she touched them.

There was a painting over the high altar of St. Trophime, a stable where the Infant lay, and a cow was eating from the manger. But it was a flat smoke cow without bulk, almost a vapor, no size, no weight, and she seldom looked at it. She never thought in line. Everything was solid to her or it was not solid. The profundity of existence for her was in the bulk and body of things. The reality of the geese was the way they stood out against the water of the pond in the hollow. The shadow from the door of the old grain barn falling on the straw, the sunlight and shadow when sun came in at the low window of the spring house, were solid to her as the timbers that supported them; and this solidity was something that happened to her. She had partaken of the profound and primal seeking toward form that there is in every process of the world. Even the rustle of the corn was form that reached her as a whole, and the ducks that flew over her head, wheeling in a circle toward the north, reached her as a whole. When the dry mistral went through the narrow cobbled streets of Arles like an arrow it swept up a swinging center of rub-bish. She always noticed that it was round.

One February morning as she went down to her fields at four-thirty an unusual circumstance arrested her. In a corner of one of them she saw a man sitting with a board propped up in front of him. He was putting on it something which seemed a matter of great haste and necessity. She crossed the field and stood looking over his arm watching what he did. He was making her cows as they came down behind her against the shoulder of the slope. Except for the whitewash of the country spread on the stone of houses and barns, the Virgin and Child over the altar, and the Mater Dolorosas and Trinities in the chapels of St. Trophime, painting was unknown to her. But she had seen oil and her mind fumbled with this combination of colored

whitewash with something thick which produced Bella and her field, in a way that looked like a field. She looked at the board on this man's thumb with its squeezed rank of colors and she smelled the tube he had laid down, trying to penetrate this matter with her body.

The man had a wild, unnatural face full of cheekbone with eyebrows of red grass. The wide-mouthed gaping ears were those of a striped clown. One eye feared you before it looked. Indrawn, suffering, it seemed to be begging you to wait, to be merciful. The other in the shadow was bold and cool. It gazed upon you with a disconcerting aggression, taking from you all you had. It was like being looked at by all the power and grief and interest of life to be looked at by Van Gogh.

She had no way to think about suffering. This man was almost as much the landscape to her as a barn was. But when he turned his head she saw a prominence under his look. A bold man, very strong. She knew gentleness and bad blood in animals. One eye of this man had the steely look of her great boar. But the other eye was like the horse that always greeted her with a little neigh and lowering of the head. She was not afraid of the boar but she closed with it always warily, watchful of her mastery.

At noon she went back to see what he was doing. He was making another drawing of Bella in a notebook, a few lines before the brigade of her almond trees marching up the slope sugared with green, throwing their strength every way over the meadow with a flying light low on it. The painting he had made in the morning he had thrown down on the ground.

When she returned from the work of the day at seven he was gone. But she saw the canvas of her cow and the swell of her home pasture lying in the corner of the field where he had thrown it. She picked it up and took it home. Her first reaction was that of French thrift. She would clean the copper pans with this strong piece of cloth. But when she looked at it as she walked on, something ran along her back. He had painted the drama of sky which had been about her all day—that whitest white of clouds building as if they loved their own form, so tangible, more white, more delicate than white of egg. This was something she had already seen, only she had never hitherto seen it so much. She saw it enlarged as if she saw it now three times. She stared at this landscape, red as a hen's comb, yellow as a goose's bill, with the mighty force there which can drive bean shoots and rye out of the ground and push up tons of water. The surface of the canvas was cut under and lifted up, like the slope itself and the way the horses came forward from the portal of St. Trophime. A smile appeared on her face, half drowsy and half sated. Here was something she liked as she liked the slope and the porch.

The next morning when she went down to her fields she saw that this man had already come. She crossed the field at noon and stood by him again. She had brought him a pot of goat's milk in return for the red of a hen's comb and yellow of a goose's bill, and she set it down saying nothing, with the caution of the provincial which never lets you know that it has been

struck. It surprised her when she looked over his shoulder that what he was doing was so different from yesterday. She looked hard at this Bella. It was the Bella she milked and fed with good grain. Because the need of talk was very great for him and he was quick to make a mental relationship, he began to talk to her when he had finished the pot of milk.

"Things are happening up there, Mother," he said looking up at the sky. "The very heart of France is beating here." He began to work at once. It had snowed for two days after he came, he told her, and there was much to paint.

Looking at the blot of shadow on the ground, watching him pour out of himself buckets of yellow into the shadow under Bella, she shook her head.

"It's yellower," she said. She simply uttered her thought. He was saying something that was not true and she put it right as she would put right a grapevine that made a mistake. He looked at her with surprise, picked up his field book and one of the crayons in the box beside him, and gave them to her, half bemused with the idea that she saw something he could not see. But they did not mean to her—Draw. She shook her head.

She was sowing the spring sowing every day, and the third day as she was going up and down, throwing the grain across with the full reach of her stride and her arm, she noticed this man there again. When she took him milk at noon she saw that he had put her into his study. She was there, planted in her land, sunk into it, sunk into her field, swinging her arm with the throw to get the right amount of distribution. Drawing his stool a little away from her, he asked her to stand still, and she consented, passing her hand round her neck, taking off her hat, and assuming the look of a headstone.

She began to take him milk every day. He tried to talk to her always when she came. His only connection with her was a railroad timetable which had landed him in that section of the earth, and that he happened to see in her field a cow with green under its nose. But since he was a man of sensibility, he saw at once that she deeply gave back an attention that was not without but within her. She scarcely ever spoke. In many days she said only "Yes," "No," and "What?" Her entire relation to others consisted, it seemed, of these three words. But once she had said, "It's yellower."

She had noticed as if she saw them with her hand the way a cow is hung on the front and back and falls away right through the middle. In the fields before the young were cast the big bulk was without shape and became part of the whole landscape, and afterward she had a sense of separation in Bella or Franchonette as if each were there an individual. One day when she looked over his shoulder she shook her head and said "No" so that the word "No" seemed something that locked behind you. She ran her thumb down that part of his painting where the cattle stood and took up the notebook and crayon he had given her some days before. But she could do nothing. She drew two lines and laid the book down. Van Gogh glanced at them, and

laid the book down too on the stool. Then he looked across at the cow and took the book up again. She picked up a clod of earth and tried to show him. He took it from her and began to model a cow.

She went every day from this time to see what he did. If she could have been afraid she would have been afraid of him sometimes in those days. His ugliness and wildness and bold singularity would have made a different woman avoid him. He threw his hand out at times as if his head were jerked by a rope. Sometimes his lips drew back from his teeth as he worked. But fear is the conscious part of a different nature from hers. She was too much tied in the great order for fear, which is an outside element, to have any way of touching her. He was not terrible to her. Watching him muttering, twitching, these movements and faces did not seem as real as the matters he disclosed. It was only because he painted so red.

He found in her something to paint. The way her nose was set on her face was material for an artist. She was a painter's object instead of only an old woman in many skirts, the color by much washing ground into itself, so that it had become texture; swinging her arm in a great sweep with her stride, the eyes faded with the sun, under a scooped-out straw hat with a tired bow at the front. Or she moved before him, minding her cows, changing their station slightly from time to time. Toward five they began to pull the ropes on which they were tethered, and then to move together toward the barn. One trotted on in front.

After some weeks he asked her to come to the studio and let him do a portrait of her. She did not go at once, but one day when she went into Arles peddling she climbed from her cart at his house. There was no strangeness in it. It was not different from her own house except for a floor of gorgeous red tiles. She had known this house for sixty years. She saw the room in two blocks when she went in, because a blind had blown shut at one corner and divided it by light and shadow. Then she saw the big easels at each end of the room and the platform and modeling stand. She noticed at once as she looked about, the hundreds of canvases stacked against the walls. The loose way the sketches were stacked was like the loose form of grain.

On the easel near the door stood a painting of the chair which was drawn up at the hearth. It was such a chair as was drawn up to every hearth in every kitchen of the Arles countryside—a strong chair with butter-colored seat. She looked at the painting of this thick chair with a pipe left lying on the seat and she went over at once and sat down on it with her mind. As she looked at it a sudden feeling that she wanted to sit on it and occupy it compelled her. She could not sit on the painted chair and she went to the hearth and sat in the real chair, seeking what she looked at.

The number of the paintings amazed her. Amount pleased her with a peasant's satisfaction in it. They bulked against the wall as her grain bulked in the barn. Some of the paintings were nailed up where she could look at them again and again, as she put up fine ears of corn. As he worked at the

easel that afternoon, she sat with hands laid on her knees and gazed about her. She gazed at a table of people eating potatoes; the bridge she crossed when going to Montmajour; washerwomen on the built-out platforms of the Rhone, their yellow carts drawn up in a line; old Jean with a cart of manure; a churn, a pot of soup, and some shoes, lemons and a bottle of wine, pictures of the plain where the ground was the principal thing—everything whirling and rocking with creative flame in color so intense that it almost bounded forward from the canvas. She went to the easel when she grew tired of sitting still and looked. Van Gogh made a movement of rage and threw his palette under the table.

Roulin, the little postman, came. He brought a letter. Bills fell out of it. Van Gogh read the letter through twice and then went away without speaking to her again. She followed him when she had seen that he was well ahead of her and not looking back. She had her delivering still to do of her fowls and brandy. As she returned she met him in the traffic of carts and horses on the Rue de la Calade, stopping to look with a happy face at prints in a window, laden and doubled with canvas and paint and oils. Three boys were hooting after him the name of "the red fool." She drove them off, shouting a flow of stern words. She pondered it all the way home—the canvas, the paint, oil, no food.

When she went to his house some days later he scarcely noticed her. He was painting the way a shoulder breaks in a door. Something had fallen out of the letter beside bills. He was almost naked. He had thrown off one piece of clothing after another. His brush moved like a sickle. On one impulse unbridled and rich, he threw the paint to the canvas. Hunched over toward a sheet of cloth, dropping his brushes and picking up the palette knife, working in the color with a quill, squeezing whole tubes of azure into the sky, or green under the nose below a straw hat. Grave, powerful, massive, the chord of color advanced. The terrific shout and charge of his life ran off his hand. Silence and painting. What was he doing?

She noticed that he was eating ships' biscuit which lay on a chair he pulled toward him with his foot. She brought him a piece of her cheese the next time. He swallowed it without laying down his brush.

She took from Van Gogh the idea that this making paintings was a crop. It was like the farm, work never done, sowing, reaping, adding thereunto. A wall of new pictures was there every time she went. He would set up a new still life as soon as the canvas of lemons was stripped off the frame and replaced. Watching the furious way he had of working, tearing sheet after sheet from his field book, beginning again, it was the way she watered, spaded, manured, covered, and the earth gave you back. The amount, the number of times he made Bella amazed her. So many.

He stopped at her house sometimes for supplies on his way back from a day's sketching. One evening he came to her barn and followed her up the ladder where she was pitching hay. She had forgotten him, and when she

looked over her shoulder he was standing so close behind her that she felt suddenly the heat from his body. She just moved the basket for the corn with her leg between them and pitched another sheaf with her fork.

When he saw that she was not in any way afraid of him he talked to her about the sickness. When he was working particularly well it always came. He saw it cut suddenly across a day like the fall of a wall. It seemed as if in return for painting well you must go mad; and since you must go mad, you were in return paid by Heaven with the beatitude of painting. Painting was the recompense. Sometimes he talked to her strangely about it. In lonely evenings it came.

"Outside the door it is waiting," and he looked at the door as if he were about to throw himself with all his might upon what was beyond there waiting quick as lightning for him only to go to the easel.

Sometimes he could not get going. Turbulent, pursued, agonized, he was like a man hit who cannot rise. Bleak despair, the hope passionately pursued found futile, disillusion.

"I am a man come home from the Congo and the Caribbees with a spoonful of sea water and a colored handkerchief. But, oh, Mother! How inexpressibly beautiful that field of yours is."

Then the immeasurable bliss of being a painter took him like a proud river. He would rush forward as if the Rhone were under his easel. Impossible to be grateful enough for this heavenly visitation that makes a man more than he is. He worked literally all day with a will fresh and bottomless. The factory was in full swing. He scarcely took time to eat and even would get up in the night after he went to bed to put something on the canvases.

"The requirements of painting are so great, Mother, that sometimes you must hammer it on the paper. You cannot spare the tube," and he squeezed whole roots and trunks from it. He had an irresistible desire to paint thousands. One had not eyes enough to see nor hands enough to paint. There might be one thing more powerful than all that threatened one, and it was painting.

In those brave days, she came to understand that "a man becomes a painter by painting." She watched rhododendrons grow on the easel with the leaves set in a whorl which vibrated as if it had just stopped turning; cypresses in a light which increased them a thousandfold, so that they scintillated on the heavy almond-laden air as in the aurora borealis; landscapes where the sun and moon rose together in a night of stars big as signal fires. Even the light round the green-shaded lamp was made of some sumptuous depth of fact. She looked closely at them again and again, coming to apprehend something plus itself, which is inside every object. It was her first introduction to passion and mental content. She was not herself an individual. What he did to her was not in her vocabulary. She had known no feeling other than for a thing itself. When the mistral swept the plain she was tied

into what it did to everybody, a part of the landscape that was whipped by it. Her world had no individual mountains. It was level, as if before Ararats and Matterhorns had hardened in it. But now for the first time she saw an individual. She did not understand drama, but in this obscure woman was an audience for the scale of his nature. She began to compare him with the marquis, the bank teller who hung his look so sadly on your face when you pushed your book in through the cage window, with the captain of the Zouaves; and to make categories. What Vincent Van Gogh meant as human being and as hero she discerned as if she moved back from him and placed him against the porch, the city, the plain, the chemistry of cloud and sky.

She began to notice everything about him with a raised attention. Hostile, destructive, this thing that came was because he was dying of starvation and he needed care. He needed the good soup, milk, wine, cleanliness, order. The smallness of her equipment suggested these cures at once. From this time she began to appear regularly twice a week at his house when she delivered in Arles, and to clean the room when she came. She would move across it, through the disorder of drawing boards and portfolios, mahlsticks, cigar boxes full of empty tubes, all kinds of moss and branches and birds' eggs, all sorts of farmers' tools and old caps, and the can at which he had thrown things from across the room—cutting a clean swath of fastidious decency, disturbing nothing that was of moment. She noticed that he always drew his chair to one place in the room, and she put it there. As he worked he drank water from a big bucket, and she had this always filled when she left.

He saw what she was doing one day.

"Deuce take it, I am so thankful, Mother. It looks so real when it is scrubbed and clean. It is a young home in full swing."

Van Gogh scarcely ever smiled. Just to make him smile for a moment was a good thing.

He often talked to her, over her head, the powerful agility of his mind which devoured every experience discounting her entirely.

"I tell you the fault lies in the drawing, Mother. Drawing is the basic body. It must be drawn so that the signal man in his smock, with his little red flag, will think 'It is fine weather to-day'."

She listened to him, getting what she had not been able to get in any other way. She often pondered as she walked back to her farm along the white road things Van Gogh had said. She had never known anybody like him. Indeed, in all the world, Fate had picked for her to know a being without a parallel.

One morning as she went early across her fields she saw him on the plain that went to Arles. He was looking at her slope and the curve of the Arles road. When she went back that way again at night she found him standing still looking at it. It was the hour when what is sky comes down into the earth. The blue actually had come out of the sky and spread on the plain,



so that it was no longer separate and a curtain. Everything was becoming unreal, and cooling, and passing into the dream.

He began to paint just as she went along the wall. Suddenly she recognized and realized his thought. What thought means came to her as if it were come out of her without being conceived. It was a matter of thinking them. She too looked at the slope and the road. Constantly before, her life had been made of what was around her, like a glacier with great thick edge rubbing against what it passed. But now from the great flow she was taken into the work of making. It was the moment when experience takes a body, and destination of its own, and passes into a separate joyful boundless life. It had never until that moment occurred to her that what you experience you may do. When she wanted to build a fence she had built a fence. She had reaped when she wanted to reap. She went back across her field and hunted for the piece of clay she had thrown down the first morning, when she had tried to show him how Bella was made, and took the clod home with her. It was an August night boiling with heat. She sat down at once after she had bedded and watered the cattle and began to try to model Bella.

She had to be in the barn all night waiting for a new calf. The calf came, a new calf from the cow. Trying to get on its legs under a corner of its mother, it almost stood up. She tried to shape it, the little heavy animal pulling itself out of the earth. She did not look at what she was doing. She did not look at what she had. She stood with her eyes fixed on the calf. She was looking not at what she had done, but at the way a calf tries to get on its legs. She stood there, her knees sprung in her skirt, her legs set apart, making a triangle of herself like the black bulls of the Crau against the sky, throwing big pieces upon the bulk before her, working off at her side, watching the calf. As the little thing began to struggle up, her hands would close on the clay, forcing it to rise under the big bulk of Bella in the corner. It was a strange calf whose body came out of the lump. It would not hold together. The loam was too light.

She was bothered by it all night and first thing the next morning she went several times to look at it. She had wares to deliver in Arles in the afternoon and she went back now and looked at the portal of St. Trophime. She looked at it carefully. The man who did three horses back in 1086 told her with his stone tongue that a shape is governed by its volumes. After she had gone about a mile beyond Van Gogh's house on the way home, she went back to the studio, pushed the door open, and went in. He was not there, and she looked at the clay on the modeling stand in the firelight without touching it and ran her hand round her neck. Then she took it home.

She had known that she should cover her calf with a damp cloth because she had seen Van Gogh do that. It was too dry the next night to work on. But she did not care. She began another calf as soon as she had finished her bedding and feeding. From a piece left of the clay she did Elaine, the old

goose. She did not need to look at Elaine. Elaine was in a fold of her brain the way her thumb was in the socket of her hand.

She began to work every night in the old grain barn by the dusty light from a lantern. She did the sow. She did a foal of one of the wild white horses of the Camargue, its head turned a little toward her. She did the wild, wheeling white stallions and the black polished bulls that are raised on the Crau for bullfights. She tried a cat but she could not do a cat. She was tied down to shape. A goose is solid like a wax model. She could do a goose. But a cat has paperiness and butter in its bones. As she saw the gathering of a cat for jumping, or the long straightened-out line as it crossed the frosty field, she registered cat. But it had no character for her. She was interested in the character of a solid. Form was the virtue of objects she had seen. The district raised racehorses and she often had watched these beautiful creatures being practiced in light sulkies along the white road. But they were too evolved, on too fragile lines, and foreign to her. She could not do a swift horse.

The earthy body which had created form by waiting, which had bulked a child, tried other forms. She never tried to do better. She never thought of mending what she had done. She looked again and began again. When she would get into trouble she would leave off and begin another cow. She was not trying to do anything from herself. She was trying to get It. What did she mean by this? She could not make them like cows. They were terrible monolithic feeble cows she made, come out of the void, too heavy at the ends, which fell apart the next day. She didn't care. She was really trying to make solidness, and this trying was as solid and beautiful to her as stone itself. She thought only "That's not It"; or "That's It"—pieces of thought which belonged to her mentally, and she put them on the bulk before her.

She never took any of them into her house. But she liked them. She put certain ones up along the crossbeam of the barn, along with certain ears of corn she picked out each year and hung there to handle and look at. Now she picked the best of these, and from time to time she rubbed her animals on her sleeve as she would rub a fine ear. She did not know it was sculpture. She never thought of showing them to anyone. She did not know that people bought such things. She did not know she had a gift. She would go back each night happy when she could get an adequate shape, finishing nothing. In her nature something had begun to talk. The blankness, the uncertainty with which she worked at first became a growth of control. What she felt and the way she worked was as far as possible from the terrific shout and race to the summit of Van Gogh. There was no battle. She did them as she sowed with her arm. Sometimes she would feel happiness that made her joints sweet. Happiness was a new thing which she had known only in bringing peace to the farm, and from her children when she had held them against herself, returning and melting them into her own body.

The days and months of the summer went on. She was busy with her

rye, fruit, the pressing of wine and oil. She could not on some nights keep awake even for an hour. The seasons passed over this part of the earth. Winter came and there was less work to do. The warmth of the big bodies of her cattle made her able to work in the barn for some time. Then she had to go inside to work beside the fire. Sometimes she worked all night in the single room of her house, the bent shadow falling across the table, the fire going out. She would rub her eyes. They shone against the rising sun.

She had trouble about the clay. She tried chiseling in wood. A chisel had to her hand something good in it. She tried cutting from the white stones which lay everywhere about. She had seen men work in stone with a chisel and hammer. She could imagine the form into the boulder better than into clay. She liked the resistance of the stone, and she would reveal a little sleeping foal half come out of this opposition. Her joy was great when she looked at a boulder after that. A whole plain of stone. Enough stone to last until she died. This went on for almost a year. She had passed beyond astonishment.

Van Gogh stopped at her house sometimes on his way back from sketching about the country, to get milk and eggs. One March night he came very late. She had gone out to the stable where she had already begun to work again. He went out there when he did not find her in the house. He looked along the beam from one to another of her creatures—at her calf, the fifty cows, Elaine, the bulls, the sow, the foal. He took up in his hand the figure she had on the shelf by the window, turned it round slowly, giving some sort of snort, and looked at her. An expression came over his whole body that only one thing could bring there. His shoulders smiled and his legs smiled.

"So, Mother, you also love God with the draughtsman's fist," he said gently. "What an artist is—That is very curious . . . How deep it is. It is infinitely deep."

## DEAR FRIENDS

*Edwin Arlington Robinson (1896)*

DEAR friends, reproach me not for what I do,  
Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say  
That I am wearing half my life away  
For bubble-work that only fools pursue.  
And if my bubbles be too small for you,  
Blow bigger than your own: the games we play  
To fill the frittered minutes of a day,  
Good glasses are to read the spirit through.  
And whoso reads may get him some shrewd skill;  
And some unprofitable scorn resign,  
To praise the very thing that he depletes;

So, friends (dear friends), remember, if you will,  
The shame I win for singing is all mine,  
The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours.

## SONNET

*Edwin Arlington Robinson (1896)*

Oh for a poet—for a beacon bright  
To rift this changeless glimmer of dead gray;  
To spirit back the muses, long astray,  
And flush Parnassus with a newer light;  
To put these little sonnet-men to flight  
Who fashion, in a shrewd mechanic way,  
Songs without souls, that flicker for a day,  
To vanish in irrevocable night.

What does it mean, this barren age of ours?  
Here are the men, the women, and the flowers,  
The seasons, and the sunset, as before.  
What does it mean? Shall there not one arise  
To wrench one banner from the western skies,  
And mark it with his name forevermore?

## CASTILIAN

*Elinor Wylie (1923)*

Velasquez took a pliant knife  
And scraped his palette clean;  
He said, "I lead a dog's own life  
Painting a king and queen."

He cleaned his palette with oily rags  
And oakum from Seville wharves;  
"I am sick of painting painted hags  
And bad ambiguous dwarves.

"The sky is silver, the clouds are  
pearl,  
Their locks are looped with rain.  
I will not paint Maria's girl  
For all the money in Spain."

He washed his face in water cold;  
His hands in turpentine;

He squeezed out colour like coins of  
gold  
And colour like drops of wine.

Each colour lay like a little pool  
On the polished cedar wood;  
Clear and pale and ivory-cool  
Or dark as solitude.

He burnt the rags in the fireplace  
And leaned from the window high;  
He said, "I like that gentleman's face  
Who wears his cap awry."

This is the gentleman, there he stands,  
Castilian, sombre-caped,  
With arrogant eyes, and narrow  
hands,  
Miraculously shaped.

## THE ARTIST AT WORK

(From Dauber)

*John Masfield (1913)*

Si talked with Dauber, standing by the side.

"Why did you come to sea, painter?" he said.

"I want to be a painter," he replied,

"And know the sea and ships from A to Z,

And paint great ships at sea before I'm dead;

Ships under skysails running down the Trade—

Ships and the sea; there's nothing finer made.

5

"But there's so much to learn, with sails and ropes,

And how the sails look, full or being furled,

And how the lights change in the troughs and slopes,

And the sea's colours up and down the world;

And how a storm looks when the sprays are hurled

High as the yard (they say) I want to see;

There's none ashore can teach such things to me.

10

"And then the men and rigging, and the way

Ships move, running or beating, and the poise

At the roll's end, the checking in the sway—

I want to paint them perfect, short of the noise;

And then the life, the half-decks full of boys,

The fo'c's'les with the men there, dripping wet:

I know the subjects that I want to get.

15

20

"It's not been done, the sea, not yet been done,

From the inside, by one who really knows;

I'd give up all if I could be the one;

But art comes dear the way the money goes.

So I have come to sea, and I suppose

Three years will teach me all I want to learn

And make enough to keep me till I earn."

25

Even as he spoke his busy pencil moved,

Drawing the leap of water off the side

Where the great clipper trampled iron-hooved,

Making the blue hills of the sea divide,

Shearing a glittering scatter in her stride,

And leaping on full tilt with all sails drawing,

Proud as a war-horse, snuffing battle, pawing.

30

35

"I cannot get it yet—not yet," he said;

"That leap and light, and sudden change to green,

And all the glittering from the sunset's red,

And the milky colours where the bursts have been,  
 And then the clipper striding like a queen  
 Over it all, all beauty to the crown.  
 I see it all, I cannot put it down.

40

"It's hard not to be able. There, look there!  
 I cannot get the movement nor the light;  
 Sometimes it almost makes a man despair  
 To try and try and never get it right.  
 Oh, if I could—oh, if I only might,  
 I wouldn't mind what hells I'd have to pass,  
 Not if the whole world called me fool and ass."

45

## A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1860)*

What was he doing, the great god  
 Pan,  
 Down in the reeds by the river?  
 Spreading ruin and scattering ban,  
 Splashing and paddling with hoofs of  
 a goat,  
 And breaking the golden lilies afloat  
 With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,  
 From the deep cool bed of the  
 river;  
 The limpid water turbidly ran,  
 And the broken lilies a-dying lay,  
 And the dragon-fly had fled away,  
 Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god  
 Pan,  
 While turbidly flowed the river;  
 And hacked and hewed as a great god  
 can,  
 With his hard bleak steel at the pa-  
 tient reed,  
 Till there was not a sign of the leaf  
 indeed  
 To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,  
 (How tall it stood in the river!),

Then drew the pith, like the heart of  
 a man,  
 Steadily from the outside ring,  
 And notched the poor dry empty  
 thing  
 In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great  
 god Pan  
 (Laughed while he sat by the  
 river),

"The only way, since gods began  
 To make sweet music, they could  
 succeed."

Then dropping his mouth to a hole  
 in the reed,  
 He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!  
 Piercing sweet by the river!  
 Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!  
 The sun on the hill forgot to die,  
 And the lilies revived, and the dragon-  
 fly  
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,  
 To laugh as he sits by the river,  
 Making a poet out of a man:

The true gods sigh for the cost and  
 pain— 40  
 For the reed which grows never more  
 again  
 As a reed with the reeds in the  
 river.

## DEFINITION OF SONG

*Genevieve Taggard (1935)*

Singing is best, it gives right joy to  
 speech.

Six years I squandered, studying to  
 teach,  
 Expounding language. Singing it is  
 better,  
 Teaching the joy of the song, not  
 teaching the letter.

And of all forms of song surely the  
 least 5

Is solo. Only the lark in the east  
 Can say—what no other lone singer  
 can say—

The glory, the glory of the arriving  
 day.

Singing is the work of many voices.  
 Only so when choral mass rejoices 10  
 Is the lock sprung on human isolation  
 And all the many welded into one.

Body sings best when feet beat out  
 the time.

Translated song, order of bold  
 rhyme,—

Swing the great stanza on the pave-  
 ment, use 15

The public street for publishing good  
 news.

Deepest of all, essential to the song  
 Is common good, grave motive of the  
 throng;  
 Well-spring of affirmation in accord  
 Beneath the chanting utterance, the  
 word. 20

Song is not static—joy becomes a  
 dance.

In step, vast unison, in step advance.  
 This is the life of song: that it mean,  
 and move,

And state the massive power of our  
 love.

## APOLOGY

*(Prologue to The Early Paradise)*

*William Morris (1868)*

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,  
 I cannot ease the burden of your fears,  
 Or make quick-coming death a little thing,  
 Or bring again the pleasure of past years,  
 Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears, 5  
 Or hope again for aught that I can say,  
 The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,  
 From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,  
 And, feeling kindly unto all the earth, 10

Grudge every minute as it passes by,  
 Made the more mindful that the sweet days die,—  
 Remember me a little then, I pray,  
 The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care 15  
 That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,  
 These idle verses have no power to bear;  
 So let me sing of names remembered,  
 Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,  
 Or long time take their memory quite away 20  
 From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,  
 Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?  
 Let it suffice me that my murmuring rime  
 Beats with light wing against the ivory gate, 25  
 Telling a tale not too importunate  
 To those who in the sleepy region stay,  
 Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king  
 At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show, 30  
 That through one window men beheld the spring,  
 And through another saw the summer glow,  
 And through a third the fruited vines arow,  
 While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,  
 Piped the drear wind of that December day. 35

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,  
 If ye will read aright and pardon me,  
 Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss  
 Midmost the beating of the steely sea,  
 Where tossed about all hearts of men must be; 40  
 Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,  
 Not the poor singer of an empty day.

## WITHOUT THAT ONCE CLEAR AIM

*Stephen Spender (1934)*

Without that once clear aim, the path of flight  
 To follow for a life-time through white air,  
 This century chokes me under roots of night;  
 I suffer like history in Dark Ages, where  
 Truth lies in dungeons, from which drifts no whisper: 5  
 We hear of towers long broken off from sight.



And tortures and war, in dark and smoky rumour,  
 But on men's buried lives there falls no light.  
 Watch me who walk through coiling streets where rain  
 And fog drown every cry: at corners of day 10  
 Road drills explore new areas of pain,  
 Nor summer nor light may reach down here to play.  
 The city builds its horror in my brain,  
 This writing is my only wings away.

## I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT

*Stephen Spender (1934)*

I think continually of those who were truly great.  
 Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history  
 Through corridors of light where the hours are suns  
 Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition 5  
 Was that their lips, still touched with fire,  
 Should tell of the Spirit clothed from head to foot in song.  
 And who hoarded from the Spring branches  
 The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

What is precious is never to forget  
 The essential delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs 10  
 Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth.  
 Never to deny its pleasure in the morning simple light  
 Nor its grave evening demand for love.  
 Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother  
 With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit. 15

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields  
 See how these names are feted by the waving grass  
 And by the streamers of white cloud  
 And whispers of wind in the listening sky.  
 The names of those who in their lives fought for life 20  
 Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.  
 Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,  
 And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

## NOTES FOR A POEM

*Muriel Rukeyser (1935)*

Here are the long fields inviolate of thought 25  
 here are the planted fields raking the sky,  
 signs in the earth:

water-cast shuttles of light flickering the underside of rock.  
 These have been shown before; but the fields know new hands, 5  
 the son's fingers grasp warmly at the father's hoe;  
 there will be new ways of seeing these ancestral lands.

"In town, the munitions plant has been poor since the war,  
 And nothing but a war will make it rich again."  
 Holy, holy, holy, sings the church next door. 10

Time-ridden, a man strides the current of a stream's flowing,  
 stands, flexing the wand curvingly over his head,  
 tracking the water's prism with the flung line.  
 Summer becomes productive and mature.  
 Farmers watch tools like spikes of doom against the sure 15  
 condemning sky descending upon the hollow lands.

The water is ridged in muscles on the rock,  
 force for the State is planted in the stream-bed.  
 Water springs from the stone—the State is fed.

Morning comes, brisk with light, 20  
 a broom of color over the threshold.  
 Long flights of shadows escape to the white sky:  
 a spoon is straightened. Day grows. The sky is blued.

The water rushes over the shelves of stone  
 to anti-climax on the mills below the drop. 25  
 The planted fields are bright and rake the sky.  
 Power is common. Earth is grown  
 and overgrown in unrelated strength, the moral  
 rehearsed already, often.  
 (There must be the gearing of these facts 30  
 into coordination, in a poem or numbers,  
 rows of statistics, or the cool iambs.)  
 The locked relationships which will be found  
 are a design to build these factual timbers—  
 a plough of thought to break this stubborn ground. 35

## NOT MARBLE NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS

*William Shakespeare (c. 1593)*

### SONNET LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments  
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;  
 But you shall shine more bright in these contents  
 Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statutes overturn, 5  
 And broils root out the work of masonry,  
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn  
 The living record of your memory.  
 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity  
 Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room 10  
 Even in the eyes of all posterity  
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.  
 So, till the judgment that yourself arise,  
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

“NOT MARBLE NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS”

*Archibald MacLeish (1930)*

The praisers of women in their proud and beautiful poems  
 Naming the grave mouth and the hair and the eyes  
 Boasted those they loved should be forever remembered  
 These were lies

The words sound but the face in the Istrian sun is forgotten 5  
 The poet speaks but to her dead ears no more  
 The sleek throat is gone—and the breast that was troubled to listen  
 Shadow from door

Therefore I will not praise your knees nor your fine walking  
 Telling you men shall remember your name as long 10  
 As lips move or breath is spent or the iron of English  
 Rings from a tongue

I shall say you were young and your arms straight and your mouth scarlet  
 I shall say you will die and none will remember you  
 Your arms change and none remember the swish of your garments 15  
 Nor the click of your shoe  
 Not with my hand's strength not with difficult labor  
 Springing the obstinate words to the bones of your breast  
 And the stubborn line to your young stride and the breath to your breathing  
 And the beat to your haste 20  
 Shall I prevail on the hearts of unborn men to remember

(What is a dead girl but a shadowy ghost  
 Or a dead man's voice but a distant and vain affirmation  
 Like dream words most)  
 Therefore I will not speak of the undying glory of women 25  
 I will say you were young and straight and your skin fair  
 And you stood in the door and the sun was a shadow of leaves on your  
 shoulders  
 And a leaf on your hair

I will not speak of the famous beauty of dead women 30  
 I will say the shape of a leaf lay once on your hair  
 Till the world ends and the eyes are out and the mouths broken  
 Look! It is there!

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

*John Keats (1819)*

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,  
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rime:  
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape 5  
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?  
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? 10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,  
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave 15  
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
 For ever piping songs for ever new;  
 More happy love! more happy, happy love! 25  
 For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
 For ever panting and for ever young;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,  
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
 And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?

What little town by river or sea-shore, 35  
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! 45  
 When old age shall this generation waste,  
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all  
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. 50

## ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

*John Keats (1815)*

Much have I traveled in the realms of gold;  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold. 5  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,  
 That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken; 10  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

## SONNET

*John Keats (1817)*

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,  
 Before high-piléd books, in charact'ry,  
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;  
 When I behold, upon the night's starred face, 5  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,

And think that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I shall never look upon thee more,  
 Never have relish in the faery power  
 Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,  
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

10

### TO THE STONE-CUTTERS

*Robinson Jeffers (1925)*

Stone-cutters fighting time with marble, you foredefeated  
 Challengers of oblivion  
 Eat cynical earnings, knowing rock splits, records go down,  
 The square-limbed Roman letters  
 Scale in the thaws, wear in the rain. The poet as well  
 Builds his monument mockingly;  
 For man will be blotted out, the blithe earth die, the brave sun  
 Die blind and blacken to the heart;  
 Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and strained thoughts found  
 The honey of peace in old poems.

5

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### OZYMANDIAS

*Percy Bysshe Shelley (1817)*

I met a traveler from an antique land  
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
 And on the pedestal these words appear:  
 "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:  
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

5

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# THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

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## THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

*Charles Darwin (1859)*

NOTHING is easier than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult—at least I have found it so—than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. Yet unless it be thoroughly engrained in the mind, the whole economy of nature, with every fact on extinction and variation, will be dimly seen or quite misunderstood. We behold the face of nature bright with gladness; we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs or nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey; we do not always bear in mind that food is not abundant at all seasons of each recurring year.

A struggle for existence inevitably follows from the high rate at which all organic beings tend to increase. Every being which during its natural lifetime produces several eggs or seeds must suffer destruction during some period of its life; and during some season or, otherwise, on the principle of geometrical increase, its numbers would quickly become so inordinately great that no country could support the product. Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence—either one individual with another or with the physical conditions of life.

There is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally increases at so high a rate that, if not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair. We have better evidence on this subject than mere theoretical calculation—namely, the numerous recorded cases of the astonishingly rapid increase of various animals in a state of nature when circumstances have been favorable to them during two or three seasons. If the statement of the rate of increase of slow-breeding cattle and horses in South America, and latterly in Australia, had not been well authenticated, they would have been incredible. So it is with plants. Cases could be given of introduced plants which have become common throughout whole islands in a period of less than ten years. Several of the plants which are now the commonest over the whole plains of La Plata have been introduced from Europe. In such cases—and endless others could be given—no one supposes

that the fertility of the animals or plants has been suddenly increased. The obvious explanation is that the conditions of life have been highly favorable, and that there has consequently been less destruction of the old and young, and that nearly all the young have been enabled to breed. Their geometrical ratio of increase, the result of which never fails to be surprising, simply explains their extraordinary rapid increase and wide diffusion in their new homes.

In a state of nature almost every full-grown plant annually produces seed, and among animals there are very few which do not annually pair. Hence we may confidently assert that all plants and animals are tending to increase at a geometrical ratio—that all would rapidly stock every station in which they could anyhow exist—and that this geometrical tendency to increase must be checked by destruction at some period of life. In looking at nature it is most necessary to keep the foregoing considerations always in mind—never to forget that every single organic being may be said to be striving to the utmost to increase in numbers, that each lives by a struggle at some period of its life, that heavy destruction inevitably falls either on the young or old during each generation or at recurrent intervals. Lighten any check, mitigate the destruction ever so little, and the number of the species will increase to any amount.

The causes which check the natural tendency of each species to increase are most obscure. I will make only a few remarks, just to recall to the reader's mind some of the chief points. Eggs or very young animals seem generally to suffer most. With plants there is a vast destruction of seeds. Seedlings, also, are destroyed in vast numbers by various enemies; for instance, climate plays an important part in determining the average number of a species, and periodical seasons of extreme cold or drought seem to be the most effective of all checks. I estimated that the winter of 1854-5 destroyed four-fifths of the birds in my own grounds; and this is a tremendous destruction. Climate acts chiefly in reducing food, thus bringing on the most severe struggle between the individuals. Even when extreme cold acts directly, it will be the least vigorous individuals which will suffer most. Each species is constantly suffering enormous destruction at some period of its life from enemies or from competitors for the same place and food; and if these enemies or competitors be in the least degree favored by any slight change of climate they will increase in numbers; and as each area is already fully stocked with inhabitants, the other species must decrease.

What a struggle must have gone on during long centuries between the several kinds of trees, each annually scattering its seeds by the thousand; what war between insect and insect, all striving to increase, all feeding on each other, or on the trees or their seeds and seedlings, or on the other plants which first clothed the ground and thus checked the growth of the trees! Throw up a handful of feathers, and all fall to the ground according to definite laws; but how simple is the problem of where each shall fall, compared to that of the action and reaction of the innumerable plants and animals which



have determined, in the course of centuries, the proportional numbers and kinds of trees now growing.

The struggle will almost invariably be most severe between the individuals of the same species, for they frequent the same districts, require the same food, and are exposed to the same dangers. For instance, if several varieties of wheat be sown together, and the mixed seed be resown, some of the varieties which best suit the soil or climate, or are naturally the most fertile, will beat the others and so yield more seed, and will consequently in a few years supplant the other varieties. To keep up a mixed stock of sweet peas they must be each year harvested separately; otherwise the weaker kinds will steadily decrease in number and disappear. It may be doubted whether the varieties of any of our domestic plants or animals could be kept up for half a dozen generations if they were allowed to struggle together in the same manner as beings in a state of nature.

The recent extension over parts of the United States of one species of swallow has caused the decrease of another species. The recent increase of the missel thrush in parts of Scotland has caused the decrease of the song thrush. How frequently we hear of one species of rat taking the place of another species under the most different climates. In Russia the small Asiatic cockroach has everywhere driven before it its great relative. In Australia the imported hive bee is rapidly exterminating the small, stingless native bee. One species of wild mustard has been known to supplant another species.

A corollary of the highest importance may be deduced from the foregoing remarks—namely, that the structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all the other organic beings with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys. This is obvious in the structure of the teeth and talons of the tiger, and in that of the legs and claws of the parasite which clings to the hair on the tiger's body; in the beautifully plumed seed of the dandelion and in the flattened and fringed legs of the water beetle. The advantage of plumed seeds no doubt stands in the closest relation to the land being already clothed with other plants; so that the seeds may be widely distributed and fall on unoccupied ground. In the water beetle the structure of its legs, so well adapted for diving, allows it to compete with other aquatic insects, to hunt for its own prey, and to escape serving as prey to other animals.

The store of nutriment laid up within the seeds of many plants seems at first sight to have no sort of relation to other plants. But from the strong growth of young plants produced from such seeds when sown in the midst of long grass it may be suspected that the chief use of the nutriment in the seed is to favor the growth of the seedlings while struggling with other plants growing vigorously all around.

Look at a plant in the midst of its range. Why does it not double or quadruple its numbers? We know that it can perfectly well withstand a little

more heat or cold, dampness or dryness; for elsewhere it ranges into slightly hotter or colder, damper or drier districts. In this case we can clearly see that if we wish, in imagination, to give the plant the power of increasing in number, we should have to give it some advantage over its competitors, or over the animals which prey on it. Not until we reach the extreme confines of life, in the Arctic regions or on the borders of an utter desert, will competition cease. The land may be extremely cold or dry, yet there will be competition between some few species for the warmest or dampest spots.

Hence we can see that when a plant or animal is placed in a new country among new competitors, the conditions of its life will generally be changed in an essential manner, although the climate may be exactly the same as in its former home. If its average numbers are to increase in its new home, we should have to modify it in a different way from what we should have had to do in its native country; for we should have to give it some advantage over a different set of competitors or enemies.

Each organic being is striving to increase in a geometrical ratio; each at some period of its life, during some season of the year, during each generation or at intervals, has to struggle for life and to suffer great destruction. When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply.

## IS MAN AN ABSURDITY?

*John Hodgdon Bradley (1936)*

WERE it permissible to speak so of Nature, we might call her a sadist with a sense of humor. We might say that she has perpetrated many a cruel joke upon her children. In an age of meticulously unsentimental agnosticism, however, we may only observe that her ways are scarcely those of propriety and compassion.

The evidence of this fact is more easily found than an appropriate idiom to express it. A man need not go to the sea where so many millions of creatures are born for the few that are permitted to survive; nor to the pond where the May fly liberates her eggs only when her body has rotted. He need not even step into the garden where the successful drone must die as he succeeds, and where the unsuccessful ones pay similarly for failure. He need only remain in the house and look at the mirror to see a creature as capriciously devised as any other.

Seeing, however, does not necessarily involve believing. For so quaintly constructed a thing as man, it almost necessarily does not involve believing. When first he saw in the mirror the unmistakable though altered visage of

an ape, he howled to heaven that it was not so. Today he is still howling, but not so much in denial of what he sees as in affirmation of what he does not see.

Few modern men are any longer shocked by the compelling evidence of their simian origin and affiliations. Not a few can even be amused by the vulgarities of the monkey house, so similar except in frankness to their own. Those whom these similarities set to thinking may rejoice that above the shoulders men are gods, however bestial they may yet be farther down. Or they may rejoice for the same reason but with emphasis reversed.

Were it possible to formulate the average opinion of civilized man on this matter, or the average opinion of one average man, it would probably disclose a compromise. Man enjoys his ferments and hormones as well as his dreams and aspirations. He is content with being a mongrel blend of god and beast. Indeed, he is more than content. He is proud.

Were he to attempt to examine himself as dispassionately as an entomologist examines a grasshopper, however, he must suspect what a biologically clumsy compromise he is. In the animal pursuits of eating, fighting, and breeding his prowess hardly matches his customary estimation of it. The tapeworm is easily a better feeder, the weasel a better fighter, the rabbit a better lover. The best human swimmers, runners, and fliers are inept amateurs when compared with sharks, horses, and hawks. Except for his brain, man is a generalized and undistinguished animal.

As a god he is scarcely more effective. Though he is the one creature who can significantly alter himself and his environment to suit his private tastes, he is the only one who is obviously maladjusted with himself and his environment. He is the one creature who might possibly obtain the necessities of life without robbing and killing his fellows, yet he is the most selfishly acquisitive and the most ruthlessly murderous of all. He is the one creature who is able to know much about himself and the world, and the only one who is habitually deluded. He is the one creature who can laugh, and the only one who is persistently unhappy. He is the one creature who can dodge many cruel and dangerous exactions of Nature, only to run foul of more cruel and dangerous devices of his own manufacture.

One need be no philosopher, pondering in metaphysical abstractions the problems of human duality, to see that man might be more a god were he less an animal, and vice versa. Between these two stools he falls to the ground, without being either wholly content to crawl over it or wholly able to rise above it. The pterodactyl with the teeth of a reptile, the wings of a bird, and the neck of a mammal, was a somewhat similar hybrid. Without conscious direction the pterodactyl achieved a modicum of success in spite of his incongruities. Will man be able by conscious direction to succeed as well? Or will he go down in history as a mere absurdity?

Before we can attempt any reasonable answers to these questions we must know what we mean by success. Most creatures have little demonstrable capacity for experience beyond the basic routine of nourishment, defense,

and reproduction. Success for them as individuals consists in eating and avoiding being eaten until reproduction is achieved. Success for them as species consists in the attainment of a sufficient number of individual successes in each generation to prevent extinction.

Obviously for man the definition must be enlarged. Mere survival is not all of success for a creature with a god in its head. On the other hand, mere survival must be the first concern of a god who chooses to reside in a beast, if the strange cohabitation is to continue. Any sound attempt to foretell the future of man must, therefore, start with an appraisal of his chances for physical survival.

As a genus, man has existed for a relatively short period. The million-odd years of his geologic history are but a moment when compared with the lengthy day of the trilobite or the pterodactyl. Yet in that moment enough changes were recorded to indicate the trend of his physical development. On them must be based any respectable speculations concerning his future as an animal.

Scientists are generally agreed that men and apes were derived from a common ancestor. Though in some quarters it is still necessary to emphasize the fact that this hypothetical creature was not technically an ape, many idealistic and even religious people to-day are able to dispense with the salve of Victorian evasion. They are willing to admit that he was probably not at all like an angel; that should he come in at the door they would doubtless go out at the window. They can believe that men and apes are cousins under their skins, content in the knowledge that with time the relationship has become more distant. Yet they cannot quite escape the feeling that apes are horrible caricatures of themselves. Consequently, they are apt to overlook the fact that not all comparisons of man and ape are to the disadvantage of the ape.

After a million years of reaching for the moon on his hind legs, man's intestines have sagged and his pelvic girdle has narrowed. Constipation and the agony of childbirth, instead of the moon, came down upon him. After a million years of reaching for nothing more lofty than a mate or a cocoanut, the ape has achieved his ambitions, such as they were, without losing any of his capacity to enjoy them.

Reduction in size and power of muzzle, jaw, and teeth brought a refinement to the face of man which no ape enjoys. It also brought the dentist and the specialist on nose and throat, which not even an ape could enjoy. Perfection of hand and head brought man the exquisite pleasure of reason and imagination—and their exquisite pain. The ape suffers neither from the absence of the one nor the presence of the other.

Nevertheless, neither these nor any of the other possible observations in favor of the ape could make a sane man want to change places with him. Men love their own anatomy and physiology as they love their own children and automobiles. Two facts, none the less, are clear. Ever since men and apes

definitely parted company in the dawn of the Pleistocene period, men have lost not a few of the physical felicities which apes have retained. By the tokens of geologic history, they will probably lose more in the future.

Fossils neither quibble nor lie. With the customary dispassion of the dead, they tell of humanity's losses as well as its gains. And their story is abundantly corroborated by the flesh of living men. Certain losses of which they speak, to be sure, need not be greatly regretted. That the tail has degenerated in man to a well-hidden bone at the base of the spine is an asset to beauty without being a liability to health. That man no longer has sufficient hair to shed water and to retain warmth matters little, so long as he has a house and a suit of clothes. Atrophy of the skin muscles, so useful to his quadruped kin for flicking off flies and for making faces at menacing neighbors, is effectively counterbalanced by the agility of his hands and the resourcefulness of his head. The only real need for these muscles to-day is in the cinema, and more than enough people retain the use of them to supply the grimacing Hollywood requires.

The progressive decadence of more essential organs, however, is a matter of less indifference. Though the safety of modern man does not wholly depend on the perfect functioning of eye and ear, it is fostered not inconsiderably by the ability to tell red from green and to hear the whistle of a locomotive. Though softened by cooking, his food is more nourishing if his jaws can chew and his intestines churn. Whether the inventor will be able to make artificial machines capable of performing such work, or the physician discover ways to stay the degeneration of the natural machines for doing it, is the future's secret.

Not one organ of the human body is surely known to be evolving toward increased effectiveness. Man's hands, which next to his brain have been his most valuable asset, are not destined in the future to be the indispensable adjuncts of the mind that they were in the past. Because modern machinery all but manipulates itself, they can only be expected to degenerate with the rest of the human body. The brain itself seems fated to grow no better. Men know vastly more to-day than the ancients knew, without any demonstrably greater capacity for knowing. There is no reason for believing that this capacity will be any greater to-morrow. Indeed, though learning and possibly wisdom will march ahead, psychoses will probably trail not far behind.

The only reasonable assumption for the future is a continuance of the degenerative trend in the human physique. But it is also only reasonable to assume that man will continue to fight it more or less successfully with his ingenuity. Despite the physical deficiencies of men as individuals, man as a species is quite as successful as most other creatures. Through elaborate care of the young and fervid opposition to any curtailment of their production, man is actually the most rapidly increasing animal on earth. Though the weak and the criminal are too largely responsible for this increase to make

the baseness as well as the briefness of their lives. For each crude exigency of survival they invent a noble motive and a pleasing manner. They are the only creatures who are both moral and polite; but beneath the veneer of evasions is the ancient lust and pain and cruelty of living. And, unhappily, they know it.

Man will doubtless never achieve perfection in self-deception, but he will doubtless continue to try. The fundamentals of existence must continue to shock his sensibilities, and he must continue to protect himself howsoever he may. Though hypocrisy helps him only a little in this endeavor, he prizes it (as he should) for that little. But he will probably never let it replace the other major division of human activity which is concerned rather with changing than with disguising distasteful things.

Most creatures take the world as they find it. They instinctively become partners with their environment. They make working agreements even with such inhospitable places as deserts, hot springs, and subterranean pools of oil. And only rarely in using their surroundings do they abuse them.

Man, on the contrary, is not willing to take the world as he finds it. Only rarely does he use his surroundings without abusing them and without eventually abusing himself. In countless ways he stupidly exploits his environment for immediate gain at the expense of ultimate loss.

He harnesses the rivers for a thousand tasks and repays them in pollution. He builds smelters whose breath, like that of Rappaccini's daughter, is deadly to all it touches. He builds levees to control floods and at the same time destroys the forests without which there can be no effective control. By overgrazing and overplowing, he turns grasslands into deserts where not even sheep can graze nor food plants grow. By transplanting such creatures as the English sparrow and the rabbit, he enables them in the end to become more pestiferous than the pests they were employed to subdue. The net result of such achievements is an increasing unbalance of man and his external environment. Though his genius for maladjustment may never seriously threaten his existence as a species, it considerably weakens his standing as a god.

Internally, man has fared but little better. To be sure, by tampering with himself he has smoothed many stretches of the road from the cradle to the grave. Through medicine he has made himself a little sounder, through plumbing a little cleaner, through education and art a little wiser and finer, through all perhaps a little happier. But he has also made himself immensely complex and confused. He is mentally and spiritually muscle-bound. He stands like Tantalus in the midst of his blessings, unable to assemble them for his own greatest good.

Man is easily the most elaborately organized of all the gregarious and social animals. His society has grown increasingly intricate with the growth of civilization. Yet where today is the human state that operates as effectively as a bee-hive? Where is the family as stable and contented as a gorilla and his wives? Even though the answer be "nowhere," man neither envies

nor aspires to emulate the bee or the gorilla. Through this attitude he molds his most embarrassing dilemma. The crude simplicity of animals offends him, so he embroiders their simplicity (which is also fundamentally his own) until he is tripped and tied by the strands of the embroidery.

By a strange combination of generosity and greed he protects the weak in asylums and kills the strong in futile wars. By a strange combination of idealism and eroticism he seeks without finding a satisfactory system of intersexual relationships. By a strange combination of ingenuity and impotence he multiplies the basic necessities of life far beyond any possible need, only to let millions go hungry and unclothed for lack of efficient distribution.

Man can plumb the immensity of interstellar space and probe the minuteness of the atom. He can invent ingenious devices for his own comfort and entertainment. He can make pictures and music more sublime than any sight or sound in Nature, and poetry more beautiful and just than any she ever conceived. But he has not yet achieved through all these special powers the peace, tranquillity, and general well-being in the world that oysters possess without them.

### III

In view of all this, is not man as a species an absurdity, a hodge-podge of characteristics that will not work together for the good of the whole? In view of all this, he well may be; but, fortunately, all this is not all. His very confusion suggests less that he has definitely failed than that he has not yet taken definite form. He may be the grub of a butterfly to come.

Compared with many another species, man is very young. Though the evolution of his body has probably stopped, the evolution of his mind and spirit may have just begun. The waste and confusion of the past may have been only the bustle of a clumsy start. Nature has always been an inefficient wastrel, and man, however unique, is yet her child.

As a species man can never excel the average of the parts, and the average is still a grub in mind and spirit. Yet individuals of exceptional and varied qualities—scientists, artists, administrators, and saints—are continually appearing. They do for the mental and spiritual evolution of man what mutations do for the physical evolution of lesser creatures. They tend to combat a rigid standardization of type. Though Napoleons and Hitlers will doubtless continue to rise from time to time, and freeze whole nations with fear or greed or desperation, they are ultimately self-defeating. The violence of their actions breeds violent reactions, and the species continues to flux. As long as there is flux there is danger; but there is also hope.

The problem of the future is to discover how the sporadic strength of individual men may be extended to embrace mankind. The need of the future is more knowledge of man, both as an individual and as a species. The folly

and heartbreak of prescribing for him without such knowledge has been only too freshly and too clearly shown.

It is odd that the nature of stars and the behavior of gases should have stimulated far more and far abler inquiry than have the nature and behavior of men. To be sure, they are more gratifying subjects for study because they are more simple. But man can live without knowledge of stars and gases, whereas he is finding it increasingly difficult to live without knowledge of himself. Without such knowledge he is finding it increasingly difficult to benefit from his vast and growing knowledge of everything else.

In a recent best-selling compendium, Dr. Carrel has brought to general attention man's appalling ignorance of himself. In a recent article that few have read and possibly none will heed, Dr. Hooton of Harvard has outlined a plan that might help repair the deficiency. It is simply a proposal for an institute of clinical anthropology, where the present status of man as a species might be ascertained, and where guiding principles for the future might just possibly be discovered.

Because the problems of man as a species have never seemed very important to men in their selfish pursuits as individuals, anthropologists and philosophers have been lonely and few. Physicians and priests, though many, have been concerned with the plight of the individual. Innumerable institutions exist whose purpose is human betterment, but presumably not one is devoted to a broad understanding of the creature it is attempting to improve.

Such an institution would be a help without being a panacea. Only fools and charlatans have panaceas for the varied distempers of humanity. When Nature vouchsafed that man might assist at the shaping of his own fate she withheld many automatic safeguards against error which she freely bestowed upon other creatures. No other creature has ever faced sterner problems with fewer guides to workable solutions.

So there seems to be no other way for man but to try and fail and to try again. Quaintly, despite frustration, he remains in love with life and with himself. This is perhaps the crowning absurdity of his present estate. But it is also the greatest hope for his future.

## MODERN MAN IS OBSOLETE

*Norman Cousins (1945)*

THE BEGINNING of the Atomic Age has brought less hope than fear. It is a primitive fear, the fear of the unknown, the fear of forces man can neither channel nor comprehend. This fear is not new; in its classical form it is the fear of irrational death. But overnight it has become intensified, magnified. It has burst out of the subconscious and into the conscious, filling the mind with primordial apprehensions. It is thus that man stumbles fitfully into a



new era of atomic energy for which he is as ill equipped to accept its potential blessings as he is to control its present dangers.

Where man can find no answer, he will find fear. While the dust was still settling over Hiroshima, he was asking himself questions and finding no answers. The biggest question of these concerns himself. Is war inevitable because it is in the nature of man? If so, how much time has he left—five, ten, twenty years—before he employs the means now available to him for the ultimate in self-destruction—extinction? If not, then how is he to interpret his own experience, which tells him that in all recorded history there have been only three hundred years in the aggregate during which he was free of war?

Clearly following upon these are other questions, flowing out endlessly from his fears and without prospect of definitive answer. Even assuming that he could hold destructive science in check, what changes would the new age bring or demand in his everyday life? What changes would it bring or demand in his culture, his education, his philosophy, his religion, his relationships with other human beings?

In speculating upon these questions it should not be necessary to prove that on August 6, 1945, a new age was born. When on that day a parachute containing a small object floated to earth over Japan, it marked the violent death of one stage in man's history and the beginning of another. Nor should it be necessary to prove the saturating effect of the new age, permeating every aspect of man's activities, from machines to morals, from physics to philosophy, from politics to poetry; in sum, an effect creating a blanket of obsolescence not only over the methods and the products of man but over man himself.

It is a curious phenomenon of nature that only two species practice the art of war—men and ants, both of which, significantly, maintain complex social organizations. This does not mean that only men and ants engage in the murder of their own kind. Many animals of the same species kill each other, but only men and ants have practiced the science of organized destruction, employing their massed numbers in violent combat and relying on strategy and tactics to meet developing situations or to capitalize on the weaknesses in the strategy and tactics of the other side. The longest continuous war ever fought between men lasted thirty years. The longest ant war ever recorded lasted six and a half weeks, or whatever the corresponding units would be in ant reckoning.

While all entomologists are agreed that war is instinctive with ants, it is encouraging to note that not all anthropologists and biologists are agreed that war is instinctive with men. Those who lean on experience, of course, find everything in man's history to indicate that war is locked up within his nature. But a broader and more generous, certainly more philosophical, view is held by those scientists who claim that the evidence of a war instinct in

men is incomplete and misleading, and that man *does* have within him the power of abolishing war. Julian Huxley, the English biologist, draws a sharp distinction between human nature and the *expression* of human nature. Thus war is not a reflection but an expression of man's nature. Moreover, the expression may change, as the factors which lead to war may change. "In man, as in ants, war in any serious sense is bound up with the existence of accumulations of property to fight about. . . . As for human nature, it contains no specific war instinct, as does the nature of harvester ants. There is in man's make-up a general aggressive tendency, but this, like all other human urges, is not a specific and unvarying instinct; it can be molded into the most varied forms."

But even if this gives us a reassuring answer to the question—is war inevitable because of man's nature?—it still leaves unanswered the question concerning the causes leading up to war. The expression of man's nature will continue to be warlike if the same conditions are continued that have provoked warlike expressions in him in the past. And since man's survival on earth is now absolutely dependent on his ability to avoid a new war, he is faced with the so-far insoluble problem of eliminating those causes.

In the most primitive sense, war in man is an expression of his extreme competitive impulses. Like everything else in nature, he has had to fight for existence; but the battle against other animals, once won, gave way in his evolution to battle against his own kind. Darwin called it natural selection; Spencer called it the survival of the fittest; and its most overstretched interpretation is to be found in *Mein Kampf*, with the naked glorification of brute force and the complete worship of might makes right. In the political and national sense, it has been the attempt of the "have-nots" to take from the "haves," or the attempt of the "haves" to add further to their lot at the expense of the "have-nots." Not always was property at stake; comparative advantages were measured in terms of power, and in terms of tribal or national superiority. The good luck of one nation became the hard luck of another. The good fortune of the Western powers in obtaining "concessions" in China at the turn of the century was the ill fortune of the Chinese. The power that Germany stripped from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France at the beginning of World War II she added to her own.

What does it matter, then, if war is not in the nature of man so long as man continues through the expression of his nature to be a viciously competitive animal? The effect is the same, and therefore the result must be as conclusive—war being the effect, and complete obliteration of the human species being the ultimate result.

If this reasoning is correct, then modern man is obsolete, a self-made anachronism becoming more incongruous by the minute. He has exalted change in everything but himself. He has leaped centuries ahead in inventing a new world to live in, but he knows little or nothing about his own part in

that world. He has surrounded and confounded himself with gaps—gaps between revolutionary technology and evolutionary man, between cosmic gadgets and human wisdom, between intellect and conscience. The struggle between science and morals that Henry Thomas Buckle foresaw a century ago has been all but won by science.

Given ample time, man might be expected eventually to span those gaps normally; but by his own hand he is destroying even time. Decision and execution in the modern world are becoming virtually synchronous. Thus, whatever gaps man has to span he will have to span immediately.

This involves both biology and will. If he lacks the actual and potential biological equipment to build those bridges, then the birth certificate of the Atomic Age is in reality a *memento mori*. But even if he possesses the necessary biological equipment, he must still make the decision which says that he is to apply himself to the challenge. Capability without decision is inaction and inconsequence.

Man is left, then, with a crisis in decision. The main test before him involves his *will* to change rather than his *ability* to change. That he is capable of change is certain. For there is no more mutable or adaptable animal in the world. We have seen him migrate from one extreme clime to another. We have seen him step out of backward societies and join advanced groups within the space of a single generation. This is not to imply that the changes were necessarily always for the better; only that change was and is possible. But change requires stimulus; and mankind today need look no further for stimulus than its own desire to stay alive. The critical power of change, says Spengler, is directly linked to the survival drive. Once the instinct for survival is stimulated, the basic condition for change can be met.

That is why the power of total destruction as potentially represented by modern science must be dramatized and kept in the forefront of public opinion. The full dimensions of the peril must be seen and recognized. Only then will man realize that the first order of business is the question of continued existence. Only then will he be prepared to make the decisions necessary to assure that survival.

In making these decisions, two principal courses are open to him. Both will keep him alive for an indefinite or at least a reasonably long period. These courses, however, are directly contradictory and represent polar extremes of approach.

The first course is the positive approach. It begins with a careful survey and appraisal of the obsolescences which constitute the afterbirth of the new age. The survey must begin with man himself. "The proper study of Man-kind is Man," said Pope. No amount of tinkering with his institutions will be sufficient to insure his survival unless he can make the necessary adjustments in his own relationship to the world and to society.

The first adjustment to be considered concerns man's savagely competitive impulses. Some may contend that this adjustment is impossible since it involves some of man's deepest instincts. Rousseau and Locke and Hobbes may be cited as authorities for the statement that man is basically individualist and competitive. It may be argued that it is futile to ask that man attempt to run counter to nature.

The anthropologists, however, will answer by denying that man is instinctively individualist. They contend that a study of man reveals his nature to be gregarious. His entire history, in fact, tells of one long, uninterrupted struggle to shatter his loneliness. It is only through his conditioning and environment that he has acquired his individualist habits. Even here, there is no reason inherent in nature why habits acquired cannot be replaced or redirected. We say "redirected" because not all his individualist or competitive habits are unhealthy or dangerous. When directed to creative and social ends, they can serve the purposes of progress, for competition can be an effective stimulus to constructive accomplishment. It is only when the competitive impulses or habits lose direction and become savagely anti-social that they constitute a destructive and ominous force.

So far as can be determined, those impulses are largely related to the rise of materialistic man, who has been a product—perhaps victim would be a better word—of his environment. Dominating this environment has always been an insufficiency of the goods and the needs of life. From Biblical days up through the present, there was never a time when starvation and economic suffering were not acute somewhere in the world, leading to conflict not only within nations but among nations.

This is only part of the story, of course, for it is dangerous to apply an economic interpretation indiscriminately to all history. Politics, religion, force for force's sake, jealousy, ambition, love of conquest, love of reform—all these and others have figured in the equations of history and war. But the economic factor was seldom if ever absent, even when it was not the prime mover. Populations frequently increased more rapidly than available land, goods, work, or wealth. Malthus believed that they increased so rapidly at times that war or plague or natural disaster became nature's safety valve.

Yet all this has been—or can be—changed by the new age. Man now has it within his grasp to emancipate himself economically. If he wills it, he is in a position to redirect his competitive impulses; he can take the step from competitive man to co-operative man. He has at last unlocked enough of the earth's secrets to provide for his needs on a world scale. The same atomic and electrical energy that can destroy a continent can also usher in an age of economic sufficiency. It need no longer be a question as to which peoples shall prosper and which shall be deprived. There are resources enough and power enough for all.

It is here that man's survey of himself needs the severest scrutiny, for he

is his own greatest obstacle to the achievement of those attainable and necessary goals. While he is willing to mobilize all his scientific and intellectual energies for purposes of death, he has so far been unwilling to undertake any comparable mobilization for purposes of life. He has opened the atom and harnessed its fabulous power to a bomb, but he balks—or allows himself to be balked—when it comes to harnessing that power for human progress. Already, he has been given words of synthetic caution. Even as he stands on the threshold of a new age, he is pulled back by his coat-tails and told to look the other way, told that he will not see the practical application of atomic energy for general use in our lifetime. If it works out this way, it will not be because of any lack of knowledge or skill, but only because of the reluctance in certain quarters to face up to the full implications of the Atomic Age which does not exempt the economic structure any more than it exempts man himself.

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However great our reluctance to acknowledge the birth of the new age, the fact is that it is already here. What remains to be decided is whether we are going to stand up to it and meet it head-on, or whether we are going to back into it; whether we should fulfill its responsibilities and develop its promise, or whether we should try to circumvent it on the theory that what we don't think about can't hurt us; whether we should carry on atomic research for practical use with the same urgency, the same fullness, the same scope and intensity as we have for destructive use, or whether we should restrict atomic research to purposes of war.

If these questions are decided affirmatively, then the long overdue mobilization of science for man's needs—principally health—can and should be promptly started. For the size of the opportunity is exceeded only by the size of the need. What a bitter commentary—not on science but on society itself—that man has pierced the secret of atomic energy but is still baffled by the common cold! Who can tell what advances in medical knowledge might accrue to the welfare of mankind if society enabled its scientists and doctors to put as much mobilized effort into the study of man as there has been of matter! Cancer, heart disease, nephritis, arthritis, leukemia, encephalitis, poliomyelitis, arteriosclerosis, aplastic anemia—all these are anomalies in the modern world; there is no reason why mobilized research should not be directed at their causes and cure. Nor is there any reason why even old age should not be regarded as a disease to be attacked by science in the same intensive fashion.

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Surveying other adjustments he will have to make if he chooses the positive course, man must consider himself in relation to his individual development. Leisure is a gift given him by technology; now he has the limitless opportunities that can come with time to think. The trend during the last

fifty years toward shorter work weeks and shorter hours will not only be continued but sharply accelerated. No more than half of each week will be spent earning a living. But a revolution is needed in man's leisure-time activities—which so far have come to be associated almost entirely with the commodities of vended amusement. Once before, the world knew a Golden Age where the development of the individual—his mind and his body—was considered the first law of life. In Greece, it took the form of the revolution of awareness, the emancipation of the intellect from the limitations of corroding ignorance and prejudice.

Once again, if man wills it, he can be in a position to restore that first law of life. But he will have to effect a radical transformation in his approach to and philosophy of education, which should prepare him not only for the business of work but for the business of living itself. The primary aim should be the development of a critical intelligence. The futile war now going on in education between specialization and general study must be stopped. There need no longer be any conflict between the two. The individual will need both—specialization for the requirements of research, general knowledge for the requirements of living. As for the problem of time in which to accomplish these dual objectives, formalized education until the twenty-fifth or thirtieth year is doubtless indicated; but it should not abruptly end there. Education, like the capacity of the mind itself, has no rigid boundaries. Unlimited exploration should be the first imperative of any educational program.

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We have saved for last the most crucial aspect of this general survey relating to the first course: the transformation or adjustment from national man to world man. At present he is a world warrior; it is time for him to grow up and to become a world citizen. This is not vaporous idealism, but sheer driving necessity. It bears directly on the prospects of his own survival. He will have to recognize the flat truth that the greatest obsolescence of all in the Atomic Age is national sovereignty. Even back in the old-fashioned Rocket Age before August 6, 1945, strict national sovereignty was an anomalous hold-over from the tribal instinct in nations. If it was anomalous then, it is preposterous now.

It is preposterous because we have invested it with non-existent powers. We assume that national sovereignty is still the same as it always was, that it still offers security and freedom of national decision. We assume it still means national independence, the right to get into war or stay out of it. We even debate the question of "surrendering" some of our sovereignty—as though there is still something to surrender. There is nothing left to surrender. There is only something to gain. A common world sovereignty.

At the heart of sovereignty throughout history there has been security

based on the advantages of geography or military might. For sovereignty has been inseparable from power. But by the end of World War I, the validity of national sovereignty had sharply changed. The development of air power alone, apart from all other aspects of the world's inexorable trend toward close interrelationship, outdated traditional concepts of independence among nations. Yet we preferred to believe that there was no connection between a world being locked into a single piece and its over-all organization. Unfortunately, our unreadiness or unwillingness to see this connection did not cause the connection to disappear.

So much did this connection exist that it led to World War II. Despite six years of that new war, despite jet planes, rocket planes, despite the abrupt telescoping of a thousand years of human history in the release of atomic energy, despite the loss of millions of lives, this unwillingness is still active as though sovereignty can function as it did two thousand years ago.

Can it be that we do not realize that in an age of atomic energy and rocket planes the foundations of the old sovereignties have been shattered? That no longer is security to be found in armies and navies, however large and mighty? That no longer is there security based on size and size alone? That any nation, however small, with atomic energy, is potentially as powerful as any other nation, however large? That in an Atomic Age all nations are now directly accessible to each other—for better or worse? That in the erasure of man-made barriers and boundaries all the peoples of the world stand virtually unarmed in the presence of one another? That they are at the mercy of one another, and shall have to devise a common security or suffer a common cataclysm? That the only really effective influence between peoples is such influence as they are able to exert morally, politically, ideologically upon each other? That the use of disproportionate wealth and abundance of resources by any nation, when applied for bargaining purposes, do not constitute influence but the type of coercion against which severe reaction is inevitable?

All these questions have been in the making for centuries, but the triumph over the invisible and mighty atom has given them an exactness and an immediacy about which there can be no mistake. The need for world government was clear long before August 6, 1945, but Hiroshima and Nagasaki raised that need to such dimensions that it can no longer be ignored. And in the glare brighter than sunlight produced by the assault on the atom, we have all the light we need with which to examine this new world that has come into being with such clicking abruptness. Thus examined, the old sovereignties are seen for what they are—vestigial obstructions in the circulatory system of the world.

Much of the attachment to old concepts of sovereignty, as well as the

reluctance to face squarely its severe limitations in the modern world, grows out of apprehension over the control a world authority might have over the internal affairs of the individual state. There is the fear, for example, that the individual Constitutions would be subject to central control. There is the fear that institutions built up over centuries would exist only at the pleasure and discretion of a super-state.

Natural and understandable though these concerns may be, they have their source in confusion over a distinction that should be made between world *sovereignty* and state *jurisdiction*. A common world sovereignty would mean that no state could act unilaterally in its foreign affairs. It would mean that no state could have the instruments of power to aggress against other states. It would mean that no state could withdraw from the central authority as a method of achieving its aims. But it would *not* mean that the individual state would lose its *jurisdiction* over its internal affairs. It would *not* mean the arbitrary establishment of a uniform ideology all over the world. It would *not* mean the forcible imposition of non-democratic systems on democratic states, any more than it would mean the forcible imposition of democratic systems on non-democratic states.

In creating this higher sovereignty, we naturally wonder whether history has any advice to offer. History tells of two experiences worth our examination. The first happened in Greece more than two thousand years ago; the second happened in America a century and a half ago. Neither experience can properly be termed a parallel or a precise guide to the present. Strictly speaking, no precise guide to the present is to be found anywhere. Never before has the world known such profound and sudden shocks; never before has there been so little in the way of previous experience to build upon. But while we should not overstretch historical analogy, neither should we fail to take into account the operation of certain historical principles whose validity might seem to apply to our own time.

Early Greece—that is, the Greece of the pre-Christian era—was not a state but a bundle of states. Though geographically united, it was politically disunited, with trade rivalries and frequent wars. The need for one nation to rise out of all the small city-states was apparent to many Greek leaders, but no one city-state was willing to take the initiative in building a genuine, common sovereignty. Several leagues or confederations were attempted, but broke down because the strongest states arrogated supreme power to themselves. Moreover, leagues of nations were arrayed against each other within Greece itself, with small states in the south clustered around Sparta, and the small states in the north clustered around Athens. This struggle between Athens and Sparta, growing out of their inability to come together within a single governmental organization, cost Greek civilization its very life.

Greece's failure is worth noting because it illustrates the consequences of disunion for states within a related group. It is worth noting, too, because it



served as one of the strongest arguments for a union of the states during the making of the American Constitution.

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There is a disposition to deny the value of America's success at international organization one hundred and sixty years ago because the states were supposedly so compact, so homogeneous, so closely knit in their cultural and political and economic patterns.

Let us see.

There were thirteen American nations in the Revolution against England. They came out of that Revolution as former allies rather than as partners in a continuing enterprise. There were varying and frequently conflicting systems of political, economic, monetary, and social organization. Sovereignty, separation, sectarianism—these fixed the thinking of the day. A man who went from one state to another found that his currency would shrink ten per cent just in the act of crossing a state line. At one point, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York were on the brink of war. In the absence of an outside threat after the Revolution, the colonies began to fall apart.

Frederick Scott Oliver, in his study of Alexander Hamilton as a federationist, tells us that "the citizens hardened their hearts, preferring, like Pharaoh, to endure the murrain, the locusts, and the darkness, rather than abandon their mean jealousies, their rivalries at once sordid and malicious; rather than part with a single shred of local sovereignty to clothe the shivering and naked form of federal government. . . . Finally, in their madness, they fell upon each other; each at the beginning looking merely for advantage to itself in injury to its neighbors, even as an end in itself."

In all the discussion over the making of America, a fact frequently overlooked is that the American Revolution did not create the United States. The United States were created largely through their differences, differences so intense that only a common sovereignty could prevent international anarchy within the American group.

John Fiske, in his *Critical Period of American History*, writes that each little city or district regarded itself as an island. "Local prejudices were intense. It was not simply free Massachusetts and slave-holding South Carolina, or English Connecticut and Dutch New York, that misunderstood and ridiculed each other, but even between such neighboring states as Connecticut and Massachusetts, both of them thoroughly English and Puritan, and in all their social conditions almost exactly alike, it used often to be said that there was no love lost. These unspeakably stupid and contemptible local antipathies are inherited by civilized men from that far-off time when the clan system prevailed over the face of the earth and the hand of every clan was raised against its neighbor. They are pale and evanescent survivals from

the universal primitive warfare, and the sooner they die out from human society, the better for every one."

Or listen to Thomas Paine on the "homogeneous" quality of the Colonial peoples at the time the international organization that is the United States was founded:

"If there is a country in the world where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable. But by the simple operation of constructing government on the principles of society and the rights of man, every difficulty retires, and the parts are brought into cordial unison."

In examining, therefore, the Greek and American experiences, we find one central point worth considering in relation to the problem before us today: States within a related group must live as one or suffer as many. A corollary is that the differences among peoples are not a deterrent in meeting the need for over-all government, but actually both a pre-condition and a basic reason behind the need.

What validity does this have for the world today? First, do the nations of the world belong to a related group? If so, how and to what extent?

The world has at last become a geographic unit, if we measure geographic units not according to absolute size but according to access and proximity. All peoples are members of this related group, just as the thirteen American Colonies belonged to a related group, and just as the city-states of Greece belonged to a related group. The extent of this relationship need only be measured by the direct access nations have to each other for purposes of war. And the consequences of disunion are as applicable to the world group today as they were to individual groupings of states in the past. The unorganized geographic units of the past have given way to the unorganized unit of the present. It is a unit without unity, an order without any order.

In a world where it takes less time to get from New York to Chungking than it took to get from New York to Philadelphia in 1787, the nature and extent of this geographic entity become apparent. All natural distances and barriers vanish. Never before in history has the phrase "the human family" had such a precise meaning. This much all of us—American, European, African, Asiatic, Australian—have in common: Whether we like it or not, we have been brought together or thrust together as members of a world unit, albeit an unorganized world unit. Within that unit, to be sure, are divisions and subdivisions, but they are all heavily interdependent. There is little point in musing or speculating whether this unit is desirable or whether it deserves our support. The fact is that it exists.

Here we must meet the argument that even though the world may be a geographical unit, it is too large, too unwieldy, for the creation and operation of a governmental unit. But size alone does not limit the area in which government can function. Unwieldiness is entirely relative to the instruments of control. For harmony among states depends upon relationships; and relationships among states depend upon law and respect for law.

But reject all other arguments for world government—reject the geographic, economic, the ideological, the sociological, the humanitarian arguments, valid though they may be. Consider only the towering job of policing the atom—the job of keeping the smallest particle of matter from destroying all matter. This means control. But control is no natural phenomenon. It does not operate of and by itself. Control is impossible without power—the power of investigation, the power of injunction, the power of arrest, the power of punishment.

But power, like control, cannot be isolated, nor is it desirable except under carefully defined circumstances. Power must be subordinate to law, unless it is to take the form of brute, irresponsible force. Here, too, we are involved in an important interrelationship, because law can be derived only through government. Law is a product of moral, judicial, executive, legislative, and administrative sanction—all of which adds up to government. And government means what it says: the process of governing. It is not decentralization, it is not informal organization, it is not the right of veto or the right of secession by any state or states. It is a central body none of whose members has the right or the means of aggression or withdrawal. It is the source of legitimate action and legitimate redress.

Approach the problem in reverse. We are all agreed that war must be "outlawed." If that is what we really mean, then we shall have to apply law. Law based on what? On general agreement? With or without sanctions? With or without protective as well as punitive power? With or without a judiciary? To the extent that the answers to these questions are subtractive, we shall fail in our agreed purpose. Outlawry of war is a noble phrase, but its translation into tangible effectiveness requires, by its very nature, the existence of the basis and the instruments of legality, by which we mean government.

We are left, then, with three basic principles necessarily related to an effective system of international control:

*No control without power.*

*No power without law.*

*No law without government.*

Are there no other practicable methods of control? Is atomic power such a menace that nothing less than world government may be able to deal with it? What less drastic plans have been suggested?

Before examining these questions, bear in mind that the atom bomb

dropped on Nagasaki represented a substantial improvement over the Hiroshima model. Bear in mind that the first atomic bomb, admittedly still in the experimental stage and said to weigh only a few pounds, was the equivalent of 20,000 tons of the most effective TNT explosive ever previously developed. Bear in mind that more than eighty per cent of the world's supply of uranium is located outside the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, which share the distinction and the responsibility for unleashing atomic energy. Bear in mind that other nations, Japan included, have already experimented successfully with plutonium, a derivative of uranium.

Bear in mind that United States territory is no longer safe from bombing attack. Bear in mind that more than four hundred Japanese balloons carrying not atomic but incendiary bombs were able to perform their explosive missions over the western portion of the United States, some being carried as far east as Michigan—although only a small number caused effective damage. Bear in mind that Japan was getting ready to launch long-range, one-way, heavy bombers for a direct attack on the United States when the atomic bombs ended the war. Bear in mind that it is possible *today* to develop pilotless rocket planes, carrying huge explosive atomic cargoes; and that these planes, from their launching stations, will be capable of hitting any specified target area in the world within the radius of a single mile.

Bear in mind that it would require only an infinitesimal percentage of the number of bombing missions in World War II for rocket planes to lay waste every city in the world—not in a matter of months or weeks or even days, but hours. Bear in mind that most military experts predict that within three years—five years at the most—knowledge of utilization of atomic energy may be as commonplace as present-day knowledge of aviation itself.

Bear all this in mind and then consider what would be required to safeguard the world from destructive atomic energy. Consider various suggestions advanced as possible methods of control. Begin by considering the fairly popular theory that every weapon produces a counter-weapon, and that in the course of time the atomic bomb will meet its match in some sort of super-atomic defense. This is by far the coziest, most convenient approach to the problem. It requires almost no physical and mental exertion and doubtless has its origin in the pleasant belief that everything will come out all right in the end—atomic bombs and rocket planes not excluded. Absurd as the theory seems, it nevertheless requires a sober and serious answer; every shred of hope must be fully and carefully appraised at a time when all hope sorely needs definition and direction.

The obvious answer to the counter-weapon argument is that we can take nothing for granted. We cannot assume the automatic development of such a device, and among those who are the least sanguine in this respect are the scientists themselves. Nor is it true that every new weapon in history has been equated by another weapon. Air power was far ahead of anti-aircraft not only after World War I but after World War II. The only effective

answer to air power was more air power, but this did not prevent cities from being leveled during the struggle for air supremacy. Nor did it prevent robots and rocket bombs from taking lives until the invasion of the European Continent overran the launching stations. But the cardinal fallacy of the counter-weapon theory is that it assumes there may be enough time in which to bring the negating devices into play—even granting the possibility of their development.

Modern warfare's only effective counter-weapon is retaliation, and there may not even be time for that, once an attack begins, for the beginning may be the ending as well.

It is said that man can go underground in an atomic war, that he can carve out large cities under the surface of the earth and at the first sign of danger can retire to subterranean shelters and stay there indefinitely if need be. Ingenious cut-away and cross-section sketches have been published, revealing vast improvements over the crude World War II underground shelters. The new shelters will have all conveniences, including hot and cold running water, refrigeration, and moving-picture theaters. But the sketches failed to explain how it would be possible to burrow far enough into the earth to avoid the shattering concussive power of atomic violence. They failed to tell what would happen to those underground cities once the exploded atom left an inextinguishable fire on the crust of the earth. If any imaginative sketches are in order at all, let us see some which can speculate upon the amount of fire and bombarding and atom-splitting a weary planet can absorb without being thrown off its axis or without reverting to its original incandescent mass blazing at millions of degrees.

It is claimed that warfare has now become so horrible that no nation will dare to unleash it. The argument is not new; it was heard when the bow and arrow were used in Egypt more than five thousand years ago. It was heard when the phalanx was developed to supposedly invincible strength in Macedonia more than two thousand years ago. It was heard when gunpowder was introduced more than five hundred years ago. It was heard less than thirty years ago after a World War in which dynamite took to the sky. But each time, though the horror of war increased, though the size of the battlefield grew larger and larger until the world itself became the arena of combat, new wars continued to break out.

So fallacious is the war-is-now-too-horrible theory that actually the reverse is true. The possibility of war increases in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the instruments of war. Far from banishing war, the atomic bomb may in itself constitute a cause of war. In the absence of world control, it may create universal fear and suspicion. Each nation may live nervously from one moment to the next, not knowing whether the designs or ambitions of other nations might prompt them to attempt a lightning blow

of obliteration. The ordinary, the inevitable differences among nations which might in themselves be susceptible of solution might now become the signals for direct action, lest other nations get in the first and decisive blow. Since the science of warfare will no longer be dependent upon armies but will be waged by pushbuttons, releasing armadas of radio-controlled rocket planes carrying atomic explosives, the slightest suspicion may start all the push-buttons going.

It will be argued that each nation will realize this; that is, that the first button might lead to universal catastrophe as all the other nations rush to the switchboards of annihilation. This presupposes the existence of reason—but reason is hardly something likely to flourish in a world of international anarchy, by which we mean the absence of central government. Moreover, there may always be the feeling that one nation can escape though all the others may go down. What a temptation for the blitzkriegers!

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More popular than any of these suggestions for controlling the atom is the plea, advanced in Parliament and in Congress, that England and America keep the secret of the atomic bomb to themselves. Conspicuously absent among those urging such action are the scientists—not because they do not believe it may be desirable to retain exclusive possession of the bomb, but because they do not believe it is in our power to do so. They know of Germany's advanced experiments with atomic energy; they know of Japan's development of plutonium; they know that the very demonstration of the successful fission of the atom is crucially valuable knowledge for other nations in rounding out their experiments; they know that in the very act of attempting to keep the mechanism of the atomic bomb a secret we stimulate other nations to undertake whatever additional research is necessary over their present experimentation to yield the desired results. They know, too, that in all history there is not a single instance of a new weapon being kept exclusively by any power or powers; sooner or later either the basic principles become generally known or parallel devices are invented. Before long, the atomic bomb will follow the jet plane, the rocket bomb, radar, and the flame thrower into general circulation. We were not the only horse in the atomic derby. We just happened to finish first; the others will be along in due time.

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Still another suggestion is that the nations of the world agree to a system of voluntary inspection. Behind this is the knowledge that it is difficult and almost impossible to hide the large laboratory and production facilities required to produce atomic bombs. It would be possible, according to this suggestion, to train a force of "atomic detectives" who would have freedom of examination anywhere in the world.

Even granting the infallibility of the inspectors to ferret out atomic bomb

plants wherever they may be in the world, two weaknesses clamor for attention. The first is that any system of investigation is only as strong as the agency behind it. The agency in this case is nothing but a gentleman's agreement lacking executive and police power. The second weakness is that any nation at any time can revoke its part in the agreement and refuse admission to the inspection force.

So far, it will be observed that all the methods proposed have one thing in common. They all rest on naked chance. The chance that a counter-weapon may be developed. The chance that war will be self-liquidating because it has become so horrible. The chance that no other nation is smart enough to develop its own atomic weapons without our help. The chance that an inspection system can work with nothing behind it. At a time of dimensionless peril, we are asked to build on random chance.

In looking beyond random chance for a firmer footing on which to build for tomorrow, we naturally turn to the United Nations Charter. There can be little question that when the delegates from forty-four nations concluded their Conference at San Francisco in June 1945, they had made a promising start in the direction of international security. Whatever its imperfections, the Charter was a signal contribution to world peace. In the statement of its principles and objectives, in the provision of machinery for making it stronger and more effective, in the very fact that men from many lands had come together, reflecting the desire of peoples of every continent to plan for world peace as they had planned for victory in the war—in all these respects, the Charter was of historic importance. Moreover, so far as the United States was concerned, it kept the door of isolation from slamming abruptly in the faces of the American people.

It is no reflection on the Charter, or on the men who joined in its making, to say that it has become a feeble and antiquated instrument for dealing with the problems of an Atomic Age. It is no reflection, because even the calendar is hopelessly out of date. A thousand years of the world's history were compressed in that brief fraction of a second during which Hiroshima was leveled. The world which the San Francisco Conference met to consider no longer exists, even though the same nations and same people represented at the Conference belong to both the old and new worlds.

After the Charter was drafted, even its warmest advocates did not claim that it was equipped to cope with war or the threat of war. But it was felt that time might work to the advantage of the United Nations—time in which to build up the habit of peace, time in which to strengthen and implement the Charter so that within fifteen or twenty years it might take the form of a real and durable world structure.

But the time factor has been reversed. Time no longer works for peace. Time today works against peace. The longer we wait the more difficult it becomes to achieve world government. There is a desperate though quiet

scramble in almost every nation of the world to duplicate the success of America, Canada, and Great Britain in prying open the atom. This race is not only based on distrust but generates distrust. The feeling grows everywhere that it must be every nation for itself. Are these the foundations of a common security? Are these the building blocks of lasting peace?

Do we realize that time is running out? Do we realize that victory has given us no real "respite," as has been claimed, but has created instead an emergency not less intense than the world knew at Dunkirk or Stalingrad or Pearl Harbor? Do we realize that victory imposed obligations from which we cannot shrink? These obligations are directly related to the responsibility we have to assume for the invention and use of the most hideously successful and indiscriminate killer in history. This is not so much a matter of justifying our use of the atomic bomb as it is a matter of following up the unprecedented use of raw power with real moral leadership. In short, it is the obligation and opportunity to equate the atomic bomb with an atomic solvent, to equate force with reason, stating to the peoples of the world the full implications as we understand them of atomic energy, and filling the vacuum created by the atomic bomb by calling upon them to join in the building of a real world structure for the greater welfare and safety of all.

And if we reject the multiple challenge before us? And if we decide that we are not yet ready for world government? What then? Then there is yet another way, an alternative to world government, an alternative to change in man. This way is the second course. Absurd as this second course may seem, we describe it in all seriousness, for it is possible that through it man may find a way to stay alive—which is the central problem before us.

This second course is fairly simple. It requires that man eliminate the source of the trouble. Let him dissociate himself, carefully and completely, from civilization and all its works. Let him systematically abolish science and the tools of science. Let him destroy all machines and the knowledge which can build or operate those machines. Let him raze his cities, smash his laboratories, dismantle his factories, tear down his universities and schools, burn his libraries, rip apart his art. Let him murder his scientists, his law-makers, his statesmen, his doctors, his teachers, his mechanics, his merchants, and anyone who has anything to do with the machinery of knowledge or progress. Let him punish literacy by death. Let him eradicate nations and set up the tribe as sovereign. Let him, in short, revert to his condition in society in 10000 B.C. Thus emancipated from science, from progress, from government, from knowledge, from thought, he can be reasonably certain of prolonging his existence on this planet.

This can be a way out—if "modern" man is looking for a way out from the modern world.



## WHEN H. G. WELLS SPLIT THE ATOM

A 1914 PREVIEW OF 1945

*Freda Kirchwey (1945)*

OF COURSE it was H. G. Wells who first perfected the atomic bomb and put it to work, demolishing most of the world's capital cities and destroying governments, but then he got busy and built an entirely new society. In less time than you can imagine after the last bomb fell, everybody was settling down nicely in a global socialist community under the World Republic; atomic energy, internationally controlled, was performing all the necessary jobs of production, transportation, heating, and such, and the creative energies of mankind were being applied to higher things. In 1914, when *The World Set Free* was published and no bombs of any sort had been dropped, it all sounded fantastic and even funny.

Mr. Wells' first atomic bomb dropped during the final war between the Allies and the Central European powers. Hostilities started, dramatically enough, with an air attack on the headquarters in Paris of the Allied High Command. It demolished the War Control Board, and you might have thought that would have put an end to the fighting. But not at all. What it did was to encourage the "rather brutish young aviator with the bullet head," who was in charge of the French special scientific corps, to go ahead and run the war the way he wanted to. He was pleased to have the War Control out of the way.

He slapped his second-in-command on the shoulder. "Now," he said, "there's nothing on earth to stop us going to Berlin and giving them tit-for-tat. . . . Strategy and reasons of state—they're over. . . . Come along, my boy, and we'll just show these old women what we can do when they let us have our heads." . . . He looked at the sky and noted with satisfaction a heavy bank of clouds athwart the pallid east.

He was a young man of infinite shrewdness, and his material and airplanes were scattered all over the countryside, stuck away in barns, covered with hay, hidden in woods. . . . But that night he only wanted one of the machines, and it was handy and quite prepared under a tarpaulin between two ricks not a couple of miles away; he was going to Berlin with that and just one other man. . . . He had in his hands the black complement to all those other gifts science was urging upon unregenerate mankind, the gift of destruction, and he was an adventurous rather than a sympathetic type. . . .

Presently the airplane, which was a model far in advance of those recently sent over Japan, for it had a noiseless atomic engine, flew across Westphalia and Saxony toward Berlin. The young aviator was at the controls. His face "had something of that firm beauty which all concentrated purpose gives,

and something of the happiness of an idiot child that has at last got hold of the matches."

His companion, a less imaginative type, sat with his legs spread wide over the long, coffin-shaped box which contained in its compartments the three atomic bombs, the new bombs that would continue to explode indefinitely and which no one so far had ever seen in action. Hitherto carolinum, their essential substance, had been tested only in almost infinitesimal quantities within steel chambers imbedded in lead.

It wasn't until he had passed Potsdam and was approaching the palace and the government buildings that he was attacked by a German plane which "slanted down like a sword swung by a lazy man" and then began to shoot. The French plane had no bomb-sight, it seems, but the pilot was flying low enough to see his objectives. The bombardier was ready.

The gaunt face hardened to grimness, and with both hands [he] lifted the big atomic bomb from the box and steadied it against the side. It was a black sphere, two feet in diameter. Between its handles was a little celluloid stud, and to this he bent his head until his lips touched it. . . . Very quickly he bent forward, bit the stud, and hoisted the bomb over the side.

The bomb flashed blinding scarlet in mid-air and fell, a descending column of blaze eddying spirally in the midst of a whirlwind. Both the airplanes were tossed like shuttlecocks, hurled high and sideways; and the steersman . . . fought in great banking curves for a balance. . . . When he could look down again it was like looking down upon the crater of a small volcano. In the open garden before the Imperial castle a shuddering star of evil splendor spurted and poured up smoke and flame toward them like an accusation. . . . Suddenly the façade tottered and crumbled before the flare as sugar dissolves in water. The man stared for a moment . . . hoisted out another bomb and sent it down after its fellow. . . . Then that bomb had exploded, and steersman, thrower, and airplane were just flying rags and splinters of metal and drops of moisture in the air, and a third column of fire rushed eddying down upon the doomed buildings below. . . .

Now the mechanism of Wells's bomb may sound a little primitive, but its action was more advanced than that of the bomb that wiped out Hiroshima—for it operated on the principle of continuing explosion. We won't try to explain it to you here; it is enough to say that the radio-activity of the bombs dropped on Berlin was "never entirely exhausted," so that for years afterward "the battlefields and bomb-fields of that frantic time" were "sprinkled with radiant matter and so centers of inconvenient rays."

Perhaps it should be mentioned that Mr. Wells's book, although written in 1914, chronicled a war that took place about forty years later, in the words of a man living in the World Republic that was established after the peace. We wouldn't want our readers to get their dates mixed up. Because we now present that man's backward glance at the social and political impact of the first atomic bombs.

Certainly it seems now that nothing could have been more obvious to the people of the early twentieth century than the rapidity with which war was becoming impossible. And as certainly they did not see it. They did not see it until the atomic bombs burst in their fumbling hands. Yet the broad facts must have glared upon any intelligent mind. All through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the amount of energy that men were able to command was continually increasing. Applied to warfare, that meant that the power to inflict a blow, the power to destroy, was continually increasing. There was no increase whatever in the ability to escape. Every sort of passive defense . . . was being outmastered by this tremendous increase on the destructive side. Destruction was becoming so facile that any little body of malcontents could use it; it was revolutionizing the problems of police and internal rule. . . . These facts were before the minds of everybody; the children in the street knew them. And yet the world still, as the Americans used to phrase it, "fooled around" with the paraphernalia and pretensions of war.

It is only by realizing this profound, this fantastic divorce between the scientific and intellectual movement on the one hand and the world of the lawyer-politician on the other than the men of a later time can hope to understand this preposterous state of affairs. Social organization was still in the barbaric stage. . . . The community as a whole was aimless, untrained, and unorganized to the pitch of imbecility. Collective civilization, the "modern state," was still in the womb of the future.

But even the atomic bomb did not immediately wake people up. The great war went on. One of Mr. Wells's lesser heroes was fighting in Holland when the Central Europeans dropped atomic bombs on the dikes. He describes in his diary the thunder, the flaring trail in the night sky, the tremendous pillars of fire, the roaring wind. Then the awful moment when he knew the dikes were gone and the sea was coming in. (He and his men barely escaped destruction in their landing barges.) The catastrophe wiped out most of the population and most of the invading armies. His barge made a "strange overland voyage among trees and houses and churches by Zaandam and between Haarlem and Amsterdam to Leiden."

"I do not think any of us felt we belonged to a defeated army, nor had we any strong sense of the war as the dominating fact about us. Our mental setting had far more of the effect of a huge natural catastrophe. The atomic bomb had dwarfed the international issues to complete insignificance. When our minds wandered from the preoccupations of our immediate needs, we speculated upon the possibility of stopping the use of these frightful explosives before the world was utterly destroyed. For to us it seemed quite plain that these bombs and the still greater power of destruction of which they were the precursors might quite easily shatter every relationship and institution of mankind."

Just as men are thinking and saying today. But then the bombs kept falling and war went on interminably, it seemed, until eventually, on a mountainside overlooking Lake Maggiore, "away from burning cities and

starving multitudes," there gathered "the conference of rulers that was to arrest, if possible, before it was too late, the debacle of civilization."

They did it too, though not without dispute, and conflicts of interest, and the final, climactic danger that they might all be blown to eternity along with their plans, by the cunning King of the Balkans, known as the Slavic Fox, who had a few atomic bombs secreted near the meeting place. They did it because they dared not do otherwise. Some of them wanted a limited form of international control, a sort of United Nations Charter. But this, of course, was nonsense, as young King Egbert pointed out. "There's got to be one single government for the whole world," said the King over his shoulder to his adviser, Firmin, who had taught politics at the London School of Sociology, Economics, and Political Science. Firmin protested.

"Yesterday," said the King by way of explanation, "the Japanese very nearly got San Francisco."

"I hadn't heard, sir."

"The Americans ran the Japanese airplane down into the sea, and there the bomb got busted."

"Under the sea, sir?"

"Yes. Submarine volcano. The steam is in sight of the California coast. It was as near as that. And with things like this happening, you want me to go up this hill and haggle. . . ."

Enthusiasm gripped the conference as the meetings went on. King Egbert's youthful optimism spread among the older statesmen (there was no Big Three). They set up a World Government, which, for the moment, was themselves; they took over all the plants and materials for the production of atomic explosives (nobody even suggested separate control when the obvious price was cosmic disaster); and then they set to work to plan the administration of the world. There was little disposition to argue; too much needed to be done too fast. Mr. Wells describes "the condition of mankind at the close of the period of warring states, in the year of crisis that followed the release of atomic power." The huge, overcrowded cities which, "under the shock of the atomic bombs," had been emptied largely of their population so that masses of people were "dispossessed and scattered disastrously over the surrounding areas." The countryside "disordered by a multitude of wandering and lawless strangers." Hunger. Disease. Large areas of China "a prey to brigand bands." And huge danger zones, in which fires burned and explosions continued.

Obviously the new government had to "act greatly." "From the first they had to see the round globe as one problem"—one world. Nothing could be done on a small scale or country by country.

Of course, all this meant socialism, although the Council had been predisposed to reconstitute the system that prevailed before the coming of atomic energy. They soon realized that capitalism had been rendered obsolete

by the character of the disaster as well as by the onset of limitless energy. A new society and a whole new concept of man's place in the world became inevitable.

Once the world was released from the hardening insecurities of a needless struggle for life that was collectively planless and individually absorbing, it became apparent that there was in the vast mass of people a long-smothered passion to make things. . . . The majority of our population consists of artists and the bulk of activity in the world lies no longer with necessities but with their elaboration, decoration, and refinement. . . . Property was never more than a means to an end, nor avarice more than a perversion.

Karenin, the dying Russian sage, described very well the period through which the world had passed and the role the atomic bomb had played in setting it free.

"Our age," he said, "has been so far an age of scene-shifting. We have been preparing a stage, clearing away the setting of a drama that was played out and growing tiresome. . . . If I could but sit out the first few scenes of the new spectacle. . . .

"How encumbered the world had become! It was ailing with a growth of unmeaning things. It was entangled, feverish, confused. It was in sore need of release, and I suppose that nothing less than the violence of those bombs could have released it and made it a healthy world again. I suppose they were necessary. . . . We've had unity and collectivism blasted into our brains. . . .

"You know, I've got a fancy—it is hard to prove such things—that civilization was very near disaster when the atomic bombs came banging into it, that if there had been no Holsten and no induced radio-activity, the world would have—smashed—much as it did. Only instead of its being a smash that opened a way to better things, it might have been a smash without a recovery."

## APOLGY FOR MAN

*Earnest A. Hooton (1937)*

ANTHROPOLOGY is the science of man. However, after nearly a quarter of a century of study of that science, I have decided that the proper function of the anthropologist is to apologize for man. To some, indeed, it may never have occurred that an apology for man is required: to others, more thoughtful, it may seem that for man no apology is possible. Man usually either considers himself a self-made animal and consequently adores his Maker or he assumes himself to be the creation of a supreme intelligence, for which the latter is alternately congratulated and blamed. An attitude of humility, abasement, contrition, and apology for his shortcomings is thoroughly uncharacteristic of *Homo sapiens*, except as a manifestation of religion. This most salutary of religious attitudes should be carried over into science. Man

should confess his evolutionary deficiencies and resolve that in future he will try to be a better animal.

I propose to offer two apologies for our species, the one defensive, the other penitential. The defensive apology in behalf of man pertains to his appearance, physique, and biological habits. The only proper recipients of such an apology would be the anthropoid apes, whom man sometimes claims as his nearest relatives. The second and penitential apology is offered for man's behavior—for his use of the gift of articulate speech, for his attempts to control nature, for his social habits and his systems of ethics. It is owed to man himself, to Nature, and to the universe.

#### APOLOGY FOR MAN'S PHYSIQUE: HIS NAKEDNESS

If you were a respectable anthropoid ape catching your first glimpse of a specimen of man, your modesty would be shocked by the spectacle of his obscene nakedness. Indeed, even to man himself it is a well-nigh insupportable sight, unless he be a savage devoid of culture or a nudist devoid of sensibility. For here is a mammalian anomaly which lacks the customary covering of fur or hair and displays only clumps and tufts disgustingly sprouting from inappropriate areas. What strange capillary blight has afflicted this animal so as to denude his body of the hairy coat which protects the tender skin from bruises and abrasions, insulates the vital organs, and prevents too rapid loss of heat or scorching of the tissues by the actinic rays of the sun? Why has man retained abundant hair only in places where it is relatively useless—such as the brain case, which is already adequately protected by a thick shell of bone, and the face, where whiskers merely interfere with feeding?

To cover his bodily nakedness, man has been forced to slay more fortunate mammals so that he may array himself in their furs or to weave fabrics from their shorn hair or from vegetable fibers, wherewith to make inconvenient, unhygienic, and generally ridiculous garments. On the other hand, in order to get rid of the superfluous and entangling hair on his face and head, man has been driven to invent many contrivances for eradicating, cutting, and shaving. The adult male White has experimented unhappily through several millennia, trying everything from a flint flake to an electric lawn mower in order to clear his face from hirsute entanglement without flaying himself. Each morning he immolates himself for ten minutes on the altar of evolutionary inefficiency, until, at the age of threescore and ten, he has paid his full tribute of some 3,047 hours of suffering—physical torture, if self-inflicted; both physical and mental, if he has patronized a barber. And even this staggering total is exclusive of haircuts.

We may dismiss summarily the naïve supposition that parts of the body have been denuded of hair by the friction of clothing. The least amount of body hair growth is found, on the one hand, in Negroid stocks which have gone naked for, presumably, at least 30,000 years and, on the other hand, in

Mongoloids, who have probably sewed themselves up for the winter during a considerable part of that period. I do not recall the origin of the suggestion that human hairlessness was evolved in the tropics to enable man to rid himself of the external parasites commonly called lice. It need be remarked only that, if such was the case, the evolutionary device has been singularly unsuccessful.

Darwin noted that the female in man and among the anthropoid apes is less hairy than the male and suggested that denudation began earlier in the former sex. He imagined that the process was completed by the incipiently hairless mothers' transmitting the new characteristic to their offspring of both sexes and exercising, both for themselves and for their comparatively naked daughters, a discriminatory choice of mates. The smooth-skinned suitor would be preferred to the shaggy and hirsute. Thus Darwin, like Adam, blamed it on the woman. But abundant body hair in the male is traditionally and probably physiologically associated with an excess of strength and virility, and the prehuman female probably liked her man hairy. In any case, zoological studies of the habits of contemporary subhuman primates indicate that the female is not asked but taken, that she is passive and devoid of aesthetic perception. She does not choose but only stands and waits. There are other theories to account for this deplorably glabrous human condition, but none which would satisfy a critical anthropoid ape.

### HIS BODY BUILD AND POSTURE

The second aspect of man which would revolt the gazing anthropoid is the monstrous elongation of his legs; his deformed feet, with their misshapen and useless toes; his feeble and abbreviated arms; and his extraordinary posture and gait. Beginning with the juncture of the lower limbs and trunk and avoiding indelicate details, a scrutinizing anthropoid would comment unfavorably on the excessive protrusion of the human buttocks. He would judge the architecture of man's rear elevation to be inept, bizarre, and rococo. The anthropoid gaze, hastily lowered to the thighs, would be further offended by monstrous bulges of muscles; knobby kneepans; razor-crested shinbones, insufficiently covered in front and unduly padded behind; hammer-like heels; humped insteps terminating in vestigial digits—a gross, spatulate great toe devoid of grasping power, lesser toes successively smaller and more misshapen, until the acme of degeneracy is reached in the little toe, a sort of external vermiform appendix.

Planting these mutilated slabs flat on the ground, man advances upon his grotesque hind legs, protruding his thorax, his belly, and those organs which in quadrupeds are modestly suspended beneath a concealing body bulk. It devolves on me to attempt a defense of these human deviations from the norms of mammalian posture and proportions.

Seven millions of years ago the common ancestors of man were already

giant primates, perhaps as large as they are today. They were tree dwellers, who progressed from bough to bough by the method of arm swinging. Their arms were elongated and overdeveloped by this method of locomotion. Their legs were comparatively short and weak, equipped with mobile, grasping feet. When on the ground, these generalized anthropoids moved on all fours. At this critical juncture of prehuman and anthropoid affairs, man's forebears seem to have abandoned arboreal life and taken to the ground.

Tree dwelling is advantageous and safe only for small and agile animals. The newly terrestrial protohumans were now confronted with two alternatives of posture and gait: either to go down on all fours like baboons or to attempt an erect stance and progression on the precarious support of their hind limbs. The former offers greater possibilities of speed and stability, but it sentences its users to the fate of earth-bound quadrupeds, nosing through life. Bipedal gait and erect posture, on the contrary, provide the inestimable advantages of increased stature, the ability to see wider horizons, and an emancipated pair of prehensile limbs. Here, forsooth, the ape with human destiny was at the very crossroads of evolution. He took the right turning.

Almost all of man's anomalies of gait and proportion were necessitated by that supremely intelligent choice. The quadruped had to be remade by dint of all sorts of organic shifts and compromises. The axis of the trunk had to be changed from the horizontal to the vertical by a sharp bending of the spine. The pelvis underwent a process of flattening and other changes necessary to adapt it for the transmission of the entire body weight to the legs. The whole lower limb became enormously hypertrophied in response to its amplified function. However, the most profound modifications were effected in the foot—at that time a loose-jointed, prehensile member, with a great toe stuck out like a thumb; long, recurving outer digits; a small heel; and a flat instep. The great toe was brought into line with the long axis of the foot; the lesser toes, no longer needed for grasping, began to shrink; the loose, mobile bones of the instep were consolidated into a strong but elastic vault; the heel was enlarged and extended backward to afford more leverage for the great calf muscles which lift the body weight in walking. Thus a mobile, prehensile foot was transformed into a stable, supporting organ.

Further, the seemingly grotesque abbreviation of man's arms becomes intelligible if one considers the disadvantages of elongated, trailing arms to an animal with upright stance and gait. The creature would be in continual danger of stepping on his own fingers, and, in order to feed himself, would be forced to move the segments of his upper extremity through vast arcs. Lifting his hand to scratch his nose would involve a major gymnastic effort.

#### HIS FACE, HIS TEETH, HIS BRAIN

Doubtless, to the superior anthropoid ape, man's most unsightly deformity would be his head. Wherefore the swollen brain case and the dwarfed face



receding beneath bulging brows, with a fleshy excrescence protruded in the middle and with degenerative hairy growth pendant from feeble jowls? What of the charnel house exposed when man opens his mouth—the inadequately whited sepulchre of a decaying dentition?

Plausible, if somewhat rationalized, explanations of these features are offered by students of the evolution of the primate brain. The early primates were diminutive, long-snouted, small-brained creatures which ran along the boughs on all fours. The first step toward higher evolution took place when some of the more progressive forms began to sit up in the trees, thus specializing their hind limbs for support and emancipating the upper pair of prehensile limbs. These, equipped with their pentadactyl hands, could be used for plucking food, conveying it to the mouth, bringing objects before the eyes for examination, and general tactile exploration.

The greater the demands made on an organ, the larger it becomes. The movements of the hands are controlled by motor areas in the nervous covering of the forebrain. These areas expand in response to increasing use and complexity of the movements of the members which they direct. Greater use of the brain demands a larger blood supply, which in turn promotes growth. By tactile exploration and visual examination there grow up, adjacent to the respective motor areas in the cortical surface of the brain, areas which picture the movements of the parts concerned, so that the animal is enabled to visualize actions which are to be carried out and to recall those which have been performed. In short, this functional theory of the evolution of the primate brain assumes a sort of physiological perpetual motion, in which emancipated hands continually call for more nervous surface of the brain to govern their increasing movements and to store up their multiplying impressions, while the expanding and active brain, on its part, devises ever more mischief still for idle hands to do.

But what of our shrunken face, the remnant of a once projecting mammalian snout? The elongate muzzle of the lower animals is useful for "feeling," smelling, grazing, and fighting—mainly because the eyes are set well back of the biting or business end, thus allowing the brute to see what it is doing with its jaws. Now the emancipation of the prehensile forelimbs from the duties of support and locomotion permits them to be used for hand feeding and for developing weapons, thus relieving the snout of its grazing and fighting functions.

Just as increased function of a bodily part results in its development, so diminished use causes shrinkage. Consequently, the new utilization of the liberated hands results in a recession of the jaws. The dental arches grow smaller; the outthrust facial skeleton is bent down beneath the expanding brain case; the nose, still a respiratory organ and the seat of the sense of smell, is left—a forlorn, fleshy promontory overhanging the reduced mouth cavity.

However, some doubting Thomases among our ape critics may regard

as futile man's attempt to correlate with superior intelligence that vast malignancy which surmounts his spinal cord.

#### APOLOGY FOR MAN'S BEHAVIOR: HIS GIFT OF ARTICULATE SPEECH

For at least 30,000 years, and quite probably for thrice that period of time, man has existed at his modern anatomical status. With this superior evolutionary endowment, what has been the achievement of *Homo sapiens*?

Man frequently distinguishes himself from other animals by what he proudly calls the gift of articulate speech. To an anthropoid ape the range, quality, and volume of human vocalization would not be remarkable. A gorilla, for example, can both outscreech a woman and roar in a deep bass roll, like distant thunder, which can be heard for miles. Even the small gibbon has a voice described by a musician as much more powerful than that of any singer he had ever heard. In fact, one might conclude that an anthropoid ape would regard a Metropolitan opera star as next door to dumb.

The ape, unimpressed with the range and volume of the human voice, would nevertheless be appalled at its incessant utilization. Lacking himself, presumably, the ability to fabricate lofty and complicated thoughts, he would not understand man's unintermittent compulsion to communicate these results of his cerebration to his fellows, whether or not they care to listen. In fact, it would probably not occur to an ape that the ceaseless waves of humanly vocalized sound vibrating against his eardrums are intended to convey thoughts and ideas. Nor would he be altogether wrong. Man's human wants are not radically dissimilar to those of other animals. He wakes and sleeps; eats, digests, and eliminates; makes love and fights; sickens and dies in a thoroughly mammalian fashion. Why, then, does he eternally discuss his animalistic affairs, preserving a decent silence but once a year, for two minutes, on Armistice Day?

"But," I say (in my role of apologist), "human culture is based on the communication of knowledge through the medium of speech." Many competent anatomists who have examined the various fragmentary skulls and brain cases of the earliest known fossil men—undoubtedly the fabricators of some of the more advanced types of Pleistocene stone tools—have questioned their ability to employ articulate speech. I myself disagree with this view and think that man originated from an irrepressibly noisy and babbling type of ape. However, it seems possible that most of the transmission of culture was effected through watching and through imitation, in the early days of human evolution, rather than by language.

Although language is the universal possession of all races of *Homo sapiens*, the diversification of speech has been so rapid that the world's population from prehistoric times has consisted of many groups whose articulate and written communications are, for the most part, mutually unintelligible. Thus,

whereas the common possession of speech might be expected to unite all men, the reverse is the case. Language erects more barriers than bridges. There is in man a deep-rooted tendency to dislike, to distrust, and to adjudge inferior the individual or group speaking a language unintelligible to him, just as he considers the apes lower animals because they have no language at all. Culture is now transmitted largely by language; and, the more groups differ in the former, the further they are likely to be apart in the latter.

Larger and more powerful groups attempt to impose their languages on alien folk with whom they come into contact. The consequent linguistic servitude not only awakens hatred in the vanquished but tends to destroy their native culture without giving them in exchange an understanding of or participation in that of the conquerors. Possibly, then, language has destroyed as much of culture as it has produced.

#### HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL NATURE

Man is pre-eminently an animal good at gadgets. However, there is reason for doubting his good judgment in their utilization.

Perhaps the first chemical process which man employed for his own service was combustion. First utilized to warm naked and chilled bodies, it was then discovered to be effective for scaring off nocturnal beasts of prey and an admirable agent for the preparation and preservation of food. Much later came the discovery that fire could be used in extracting and working metals and last of all that it could be employed to generate power. In ancient times man began to use fire as a weapon, beginning with incendiary torches and arrows and proceeding to explosives, which have been developed principally for the destruction of human beings and their works.

In the control and utilization of gases, the achievements of our species have not been commendable. One might begin with air, which man breathes in common with other terrestrial vertebrates. He differs from other animals in that he seems incapable of selecting the right kind of air for breathing. Man is forever doing things which foul the air and poisoning himself by his own stupidity. He pens himself up in a limited air space and suffocates; he manufactures noxious gases which accidentally or intentionally displace the air and remove him from the ranks of the living; he has been completely unable to filter the air of the disease germs, which he breathes to his detriment; he and all his works are powerless to prevent a hurricane or to withstand its force. Man has indeed been able to utilize the power of moving air currents to a limited extent and to imitate the flight of birds, with the certainty of eventually breaking his neck if he tries it.

Man uses water much in the same way as other animals; he has to drink it constantly, washes in it frequently, and drowns in it occasionally—probably

oftener than other terrestrial vertebrates. Without water, he dies as miserably as any other beast and, with too much of it, as in floods, he is equally unable to cope. However, he excels other animals in that he has learned to utilize water power.

But it is rather man's lack of judgment in the exercise of control of natural resources which would disgust critics of higher intelligence, although it would not surprise the apes. Man observes that the wood of trees is serviceable for constructing habitations and other buildings. He straightway and recklessly denudes the earth of forests, in so far as he is able. He finds that the meat and skins of the bison are valuable and immediately goes to work to exterminate the bison. He allows his grazing animals to strip the turf from the soil so that it is blown away and fertile places become deserts. He clears for cultivation and exhausts the rich land by stupid planting. He goes into wholesale production of food, cereals, fruits and livestock and allows the fruits of his labors to rot or to starve because he has not provided any adequate method of distributing them or because no one can pay for them. He invents machines which do the work of many men, and is perplexed by the many men who are out of work. It would be hard to convince judges of human conduct that man is not an economic fool.

#### HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL HIMSELF

Man's efforts to control himself, individually and in society, might impel a gorilla to thump his chest and roar with laughter. Let us consider the probable reactions of the chimpanzee to familial functions as performed by modern man.

The ape child begins to fend for itself at an early age. An anthropoid would not understand the domestic custom whereby the young are maintained as economic parasites by their parents for two decades or more of their lives, long after they have reached sexual maturity and adult size.

In ape society a young male does not acquire a mate until he is able to take her by beating off his rivals and to make good his possession. The female is, of course, always self-supporting. The situation of the young man who could not marry his girl because they couldn't live with her folks because her folks were still living with their folks, would not arise in anthropoid society. Apes appear to manage the number of their progeny with such discretion that no mother produces new offspring while she is still burdened with the care of previous infants. Furthermore, the size of any ape group seems to be restricted by the ability of its members to gain a livelihood, whereas, in human society, the less economically capable the group, the more numerous the offspring.

Again, the weak, sickly, and constitutionally unfit among the anthropoid apes are eliminated, either through neglect or deliberately. This is doubtless because our cousins are insufficiently intelligent to have developed those

humanitarian sentiments which demand the preservation of life, however painful it is to its possessors and however useless to society.

A critic who had surveyed the great advances which man has made in his material culture might examine with high expectation the extent to which he has applied his intelligence to the improvement of his health and biological status.

The ordinary animal tries to protract his individual existence only by eating, running away and hiding, and his species' existence by breeding and by some exercise of parental care. Primitive man has added another preservative—medical care. The medical science of the savage is, however, compounded of magic and superstition and includes few remedies of actual value. The doctor at the primitive stage of culture kills oftener than he cures. He merely adds to the strain, on a long-suffering organism, exerted by the pressure of a ruthless natural selection.

Medical skill was a negligible factor in the increase of human populations up to the last century, even in the most civilized societies. Now, however, advance in medical knowledge, together with public hygiene and sanitation, has radically reduced the mortality at the beginning of the life span and literally has taken the graves out from under the feet of the aging. In the United States the death rate during the first year of males born alive has been reduced from 12.7 per cent to 6.2 per cent in thirty years, and the expectation of life has increased since the beginning of the century from 48 to 59 years for males and from 51 to 63 years for females. Short of homicide, a man has practically no chance of outliving his wife; females, after attaining a certain age, become almost immortal.

Now it is perfectly obvious to intelligent judges of man's behavior that this preservation and prolongation of life largely increases the proportion among the living population of the constitutionally inferior—the lame, the halt, and the blind. It also makes for a world peopled increasingly with the immature and the senile—those who have not yet developed their mental powers and their judgment and those who are in process of losing both. If medical science were able to make whole the bodies and minds it preserves, one might find little to criticize in the age shift in the composition of the population. But it is unfortunately true that we have succeeded all too well in keeping the engine running but have been quite unable to repair the steering gear. Since the immature are not granted a voice in the government and the decrepit are not denied it, we may expect ever-increasing social ructions, as a result of senile decay dominating dementia praecox in a world of diminishing average intelligence.

One of the human institutions for which apology is required is government. Undoubtedly an anthropoid ape would appreciate and understand government by dictatorship; he might even realize the advantages of a communistic regime. But a superhuman critic of man's affairs would be puzzled by a democracy. He would have to be informed that democracy involves

the essential principle that all law-abiding adults have equal rights and privileges and an equal voice in government. Such a democratic government should imply an approximate parity of intelligence in the electorate or a majority of individuals of superior intelligence, if it is to function capably and successfully. There can be no miracle whereby the group intelligence transcends the possibly moronic mean of its constituent members.

Now, on the whole, there is a marked positive association between bodily health and mental health. A ten-year study of American criminals and insane has convinced me that there is an even stronger correlation between mental and social inadequacy and biological inferiority. Since civilized men are preserving the unfit in body, it follows that they are depreciating their intelligence currency.

Judges of human behavior, examining modern warfare, would probably reason as follows: "Men are too soft-hearted to keep their populations down to the right numbers by birth control or infanticide. Therefore, when the weak, the unfit, and the useless grow to adult years and become a menace to the common good, nations conspire mutually to start patriotic crusades, whereby their superfluous and inferior populations destroy each other in a high atmosphere of heroism and devotion to public duty."

As the protagonist of the human race, I must admit that in warfare, on the contrary, we select as the victims not the bodily and mentally unfit but those adjudged to be the flower of each nation. Nor do I know how to answer the retort that man's right hand certainly does not know what his left hand is doing, when with the one he preserves the worst of his kind and with the other destroys the best.

I ought probably to try to divert attention from this issue by decanting on the grandeur of human conceptions of justice, the sanctity of the law, and the efficiency of the police systems organized to prevent its infraction; how we regard the criminal not as a vicious brute to be exterminated but as a wayward or sick child to be rehabilitated and cured by patient and loving care. I ought to tell how, at each Christmas season, our wise and noble governors bestow on their happy States the priceless gift of a goodly parcel of liberated murderers, thieves, and other convicted felons.

Such a plea would nauseate an ape. For no animal society tolerates the outlaw. The anti-social animal is killed or driven out. Judges of superior intelligence, however, would put some pertinent questions:

"Is it not true that a liberal education at the public expense has long been extended to nearly every class of person in the United States?"

"Is it true that the noble-spirited, who formerly concerned themselves with the salvation of men's souls, are now no longer attempting to prepare men for heaven but rather to rescue them from a very present hell?"

"Has not the treatment of the delinquent been improved until now, it almost may be said that the convicted felon receives more social consideration than the law-abiding working man?"

"Does not crime still increase enormously, and the discharged convict continue to return to his crime like a dog to his vomit?"

"Is it not therefore apparent, in the light of the evidence you have presented, that modern man is selling his biological birthright for a mess of morons, that the voice may be the voice of democracy but the hands are the hands of apes?"

## BREAKING THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

(*From Love against Hate*)

*Karl Menninger (1945)*

WHEN a man falls down and breaks his leg, we do not rail at the law of gravity even though we recognize that gravity "caused" the fall. If we are practical and proximate and humane, we devote our attention to putting splints on the poor fellow's leg, knowing that in time—after a measure of suffering and disability—he will regain its use.

But if we are more than merely practical, if we are foresighted and intelligent, we shall want to do more than this. We shall want to find out more precisely why this man was overcome by gravity at this particular place and at this particular moment. We may learn that he has fallen several times of late, or we may learn that others have fallen at this same spot. We shall want to examine the man's shoes, his habits, and his nervous system. We shall also want to examine the flooring and the lighting. We may even want to put up a sign saying "Watch Your Step."

Most of my professional life has been spent in applying splints. Some of the injured recover; their legs heal, and they walk more carefully thereafter. But this role of standing by and waiting for the next victim to slip and fall and cry out for help before we rush up with our services is not an entirely satisfactory one for the physician. That is why we have turned increasingly to preventive medicine and public health programs. In so far as we can derive principles from our experience with individuals that can be applied to the public weal, it is our duty to report them and to urge their application. To shake our heads and warn people of the seriousness of breaking a leg is not enough. To cry out, "Watch Your Step!" is not enough. To rush up with a pair of splints is not enough.

The trouble is more fundamental than a mere moment of distraction, a careless misstep for which a warning can suffice as a preventive. Accidents don't happen; they are caused, and chance plays a small part in this causation. This is the conclusion of the engineers of the Public Safety Division of the National Safety Council. It is also the conclusion of the psychiatrist from clinical experience, and the same is true of most human ills, including those to which we are now giving our attention. People never just "slip" into

trouble—depression, obsession, anxiety, alcoholism, perversion, chronic illness—all the forms of self-destruction. They *march* into trouble as if by inevitable predetermination. And the psychiatrist is like a Cassandra—he knows what is coming and foretells it. He knows even more—he knows *why* it is coming and how it could probably be forestalled. It is his duty to proclaim this.

The crucial question is: *How can this vicious circle be broken?* What can be done through deliberate planning, through the application of intelligence and scientific knowledge, toward the interruption of this self-perpetuating interaction of resentments? What can the thinking man and woman do to counteract the trend of emotional misdirection which engulfs them and their children no less than their parents and grandparents so that today the world is burning up with flames of hate?

Shall we succumb to pessimism and call this a hopeless task? This is what those do who think in terms of fate, nemesis, the will of God, hereditary predestination, and of economic determination. Some of those who believe in the last theory point to the rigidity of the social pattern and remind us of the power of economic pressure. Men and women, they say, are bound by an artificial structure imposed by a ruling class which holds most of us helpless in its grasp. It will be idle to wave all such persons aside as ultra-pessimists, for this they are not. Some of them are ultra-optimists: they have a sure solution. Revise the social order, they say, discard the vicious economic system in which we live, and all these troubles will disappear. Men and women will be free; their frustrations will vanish; their love will flow to their children; and their children, like themselves, will grow up in a happier world where hate is unknown.

I wish I could be as optimistic and idealistic as the Marxians and those who, less revolutionary in their program, believe that one can attack or treat the social order as if it were a biological entity, and make it over into something better by changing its diet. Both those who believe in changing the system from the roots and the less radical but no less articulate enthusiasts for the theory of "social orientation" are relatively free from the superstition that behavior is determined entirely by heredity. But both make the comparable error of overemphasizing the contemporary environment to the neglect of instinctual needs and childhood personality influences.

It is useless to debate such an issue in the opponent's territory because the discussion rapidly reduces itself to a mere statement of conflicting opinions. He can say, for example, that it is pointless to discuss instincts and frustrations, love and hate, sublimations and gratifications, when the economic situation is such that people are hungry; a man cannot think of loving his wife if he is faced with the terror of starvation. This, I concede, is true for collective unemployment, but not in the particular case. That a man does not have a job does not prove that the economic system is a bad one; it is at least equally possible that his not having a job has some relation to his own



incapacities—let us even go so far as to say his own self-destructiveness. Such a reply throws my more extreme opponents into a frenzy of exasperation. They regard it as an evidence of total blindness to the suffering of millions, and class me immediately with those calloused exploiters of labor whom they regard as the archdevils of civilization. It is all true to form, they say. "Freud had no social awareness; psychoanalysis is a bourgeois luxury for the amelioration of the bad consciences of the less insensitive exploiters; doctors generally are a selfish, stupid lot, who do not realize that it is futile to work for a price at patching the wounds of a hundred in a battle which is slaughtering millions."

But no economic order ever arose or ever could arise that did not spring from the imaginations and needs and instincts of the human beings it governs. That the present order is a creation of hate more than of love I freely concede. It was built by a race of men who did not fully understand or know how to control the power of hate. But the cultivation of love in the heart of the individual and in his relations with those about him may ultimately change the economic system in which he and they and others live.

"The problem is therefore presented to the men of science to devise a method of generating friendly feelings in the mass of mankind," said Bertrand Russell. "Exhortation has not proved very effective. . . . I have no doubt whatever that methods could be devised for creating a world in which most men had friendly feelings toward other men, but I think rivers of blood will have to flow before the holders of power will allow such a world to be created, and I am doubtful whether rivers of blood are the right kind of rivers to water the tender plant of human kindness."

At first blush it might be thought that everyone subscribes *in theory* to the desirability of such a program. But in the past few years the political direction of three great empires has been based on the contrary principle—the Nietzschean platform that more hate and less love makes for a better world. We in America, like the peoples of China, Britain, and Russia, cling to our belief in what we call democracy, which really only means that we do not favor pushing people around, that we do not exalt hate, and that we do want to love and be loved. "Rotten," "effeminate," "hypocritical," "degenerate," the fascists call it. But we believe in it. We live by it. We fight for it. We die for it.

It is all the more timely, then, to ask the question: How can we achieve democracy, psychologically speaking? How can we bring about better human relationships? What are the methods of cultivating love and increasing our capacities for it? What are the methods available for harnessing or diminishing our hates?

"The voice of the intelligence is weak," said Freud, "but it is persistent." Knowledge of the truth cannot make sudden and revolutionary changes, but to know the truth can help to make us freer, if not exactly free. As clearly as we can see the truth, it is that men and women for their own unconscious

purposes frustrate not only each other, but their children. If some of this is, as we believe, unnecessary, it only requires that it be seen clearly for some of the frustration to be abrogated.

If we could provide children with a more consistent atmosphere of affection, their frustrations would be diminished in number and in intensity and their emotional security would be enhanced so that their subsequent lives would be freer from ebullitions of aggressiveness. The fundamental principle that the capacity for love and hatred is developed in childhood as a result of parental attitudes and behavior is thus of basic importance. So long as people assume that the hatreds of today depend upon events of only yesterday instead of the events of many years ago, they are futilely entangled in a psychological fallacy. Furthermore, most of the injuries to the child occur while the parent is unconscious of the fact that he is inflicting them, and they are also repressed into unconsciousness by the child, so that he, too, "forgets" them. This creates a *terra incognita*. It is a basic principle of modern psychology that to bring something which has been unconscious into the consciousness of a person, whether it be through education or through psychoanalysis, acts therapeutically by broadening the domain of the ego or, to put it in more philosophical terms, by extending the limits of the region in which it is possible to exercise free will.

To become aware of our aggressiveness is not only the first but it is also the most important step in correcting it and thus enabling us to replace it with love. This, in turn, allows us to stimulate a great development of love reactions and love patterns in those who are most strongly influenced by us, especially our children.

What possibility is there of diminishing or harnessing the aggressive impulses which have already come to dominate the life of the *adult*? Most of us have passed our childhood and are now battling, on the one hand, permanent hostile structures in the framework of civilization and, on the other hand, permanent structures in our own personalities which give rise to incompletely controlled hatred. What can *we* do about our aggressions?

I was once invited to speak to a group of probation officers. As I sat and looked at my audience before being called upon, I turned over in my mind some pictures of their daily work, that of going about the state of New York checking up on paroled prisoners. I compared this professional interest in probation with the unspoken, unrecorded conflicts which I knew must exist within the hearts of these very probation officers themselves, the struggles with envy and insecurity, the aspirations for success, the hopes for promotion. I asked myself, "Who is there that is not 'on probation'? And against what temptations are we on probation? Are we not *all* on probation against the victory of our own aggressions over our efforts to control them?" The ex-prisoner who is on probation is only an exception who failed glaringly once, or twice, or more, and was caught in his failure, caught, tried,

punished, and released, and who now needs reinforcement in his good intentions. His aggressions may escape again; and so may ours.

To the extent that we do manage to control ourselves—to the extent that *anyone* controls the forces of hate which a lifetime of frustrations has aroused within him—how do we do it? How does anyone do it? How do we do it at all?

To answer these questions I think we must review once more the life history of the aggressive instinct:

No sooner is a child born than the self-absorption which characterizes the fetal state must begin to disappear. He begins to respond to the irritations of the outside world, meeting them first with hostility, then with tolerance, finally with affection. Irritations are retreated from or are conquered. The child may make these objects a part of himself, and if he does so the constructive outcome of this process is the result of a modification of the original hostile impulses by the infusion of erotic impulses. There remains, of course, much unexpended self-destructive energy, but in the natural order of things more and more of the aggressive capacity of the growing child is directed outward. At one stage in his development it far exceeds the capacity of his erotic energies to neutralize it. Hence in childhood and adolescence we observe the manifestations of unabashed criminality, savagery, destructiveness. But after this, in the normal course of development, the constructive energies begin to assume dominance. One sees the development of philanthropic impulses, with reaction against all those traits which seemed to dominate the earlier years, and a deflection of aggressive energy toward objects the destruction of which is in the interests of self-preservation. The little criminal becomes the G-man. The jealous sister becomes the protective nurse. The boy who wanted to chop off his little brother's head becomes a surgeon. One of the children at the Southard School who had been sent for treatment because of his compulsion to burn down his father's garage became chief of the fire prevention program. The fundamental psychological motivation in the choice of all the professions arises at this point of reaction-formation. Reaction-formation is in time gradually infused with more directly motivated constructiveness, motivated not so much by undoing evil as by doing good. Evil itself rather than persons felt to be foes becomes the object of the destructiveness, and the individual is then on the threshold of complete maturity.

In the final stage—if it is successfully attained—there is no self-destructiveness. Internally directed aggressiveness disappears completely, and external aggressiveness is directed only toward threatening or existing dangers. The mature love object, in so far as it is selected for its own sake and not as a symbol of some reluctantly abandoned earlier object, receives the unalloyed affection, protection, and confidence of the one-time child, now the mature adult.

This is the schematized natural history of the victory of the life instinct (love) over the death instinct (hate). All aggressive energy except that small quantity necessary for self-defense against real dangers is turned into useful channels and employed in the services of living and loving. Aggression, destructive energy, is thus effectively denatured, and by a shift in object and modality it becomes constructive. This latter process constitutes *sublimation*, as I view it.<sup>1</sup>

Freud introduced the term but he was never very explicit in his definition of it, so that various concepts of its meaning exist. In the earlier days of psychoanalysis—before the recognition of the destructive energies—it was used in a loose and variable way, which is still reflected in popular attitudes. The idea came to prevail that if one substituted a non-sexual activity for a sexual activity, this represented a process of *enheightenment*, provided it were socially acceptable. But this idea was based on the illusion of an old and false morality, according to which anything sexual was something low and vile and hence the replacement of it by something non-sexual was morally superior, more “sublime.”

But how is it possible to “sublimate” sexuality when sexuality is already the highest and finest thing we know? What we *can* sublimate is our aggressive tendencies, and it is the infusion of sexuality into them which enables this to be accomplished. A woman, for example, who, deprived of her lover, turns to the profession of nursing as a consolation is making a sublimation, but not of her sexual energies as was formerly thought; her sexual energies are enabling her to sublimate her disappointment, her resentment, her destructive impulses. It is these latter impulses which need elevating. Sublimation is always a compromise; it is better to love than to sublimate but better to sublimate than to hate.

If there were no aggressions to be harnessed, sublimations would be unnecessary. We would till the fields or nurse the sick out of pure love, which is just what many people think they are doing. But hate, like the poor,

<sup>1</sup> There is a technical point here. Is it sublimation, someone will ask, to shoot a marauder in self-defense or to man a machine gun against the Japanese? This is certainly aggression in the service of living, and in a broad interpretation of the ideas here presented it might be called sublimation. Technically, it would not be sublimation, however, because the aggressive element is not unconscious. Neither is the aggression entirely unconscious, however, when the rancher shoots wolves that prey upon his flock or the orchardist sprays his trees to kill insects. The conscious realization of the destructive element and the variations in zest with which it is accomplished do not alter the fundamental purpose and therefore the real meaning of the destructiveness, however. The feeling of a need for definitely established constructiveness in the ultimate object of the destructiveness is to be seen in the current demand for a definition of our war aims. Dr. Robert Knight has called my attention to the fact that Sergeant York justified his killing of so many of the enemy soldiers, in spite of his conscious conflict over fighting and killing human beings, by saying that it seemed to be the best and quickest way to bring to a close the organized mass murder represented by the war. The fiercer the fighting, the more intense the temporary destructiveness, the less total destructiveness. This may be a rationalization, but it is one with which most of us would agree.

we have always with us and to master it absorbs some of our supply of love. In some individuals it requires so much that a personal love relationship is impossible. Many who have revered the glorious life of Clara Barton interpret it as the substitution of the love of humanity for the love of a man who died. What they forget is that she repeatedly rejected this lover through a feeling of inadequacy to the demands of a love relationship. (Abraham Lincoln's love history was somewhat similar.)

The normal individual, then, might be described as one who is able to invest his love in a full and satisfying way in certain direct objects—primarily, his wife and children; secondarily, a group of intimate friends, the larger group of society (not vaguely but specifically, in practical humanitarian activities); and, finally, such non-human love objects as are available and meaningful to him. At the same time he will have invested (sublimated) his aggressions in ways which will protect, support, and foster a fuller realization of these loves. As a practical matter, one may say that if the aggressions are well invested, well controlled by a sufficient infusion of erotic elements, well “sublimated,” the love life will take care of itself.

Here we have much to learn from the empirical observations of psychoanalysts. As I have related in *Man Against Himself*, the dynamic processes in psychoanalytic therapy can be described as the establishment of a situation in which the aggressions which have failed of sublimation are redirected. They have previously been misdirected either toward the individual himself in the form of self-destruction or toward elements in the environment which were undeserving of such attacks, and they are now temporarily permitted to find expression toward a person (the analyst) sufficiently objective not to retaliate or even to discourage such expressions. Rather, he assists the patient to recognize the inappropriateness of his investments of hate and to enlist the aid of his unfettered intelligence in finding more expedient and controlled directions for his love and hate. Patients first gain the courage to heap upon the analyst a full measure of their scorn, bitterness, resentment, and unreasoning hate, and then, gradually, gain the courage and the insight to direct this energy into more logical, more fruitful channels. The better investment of this hate enables the previously inhibited love impulses to be expressed directly, also, and to aid in mitigating, altering, and fructifying the aggressive energy.

This basic psychoanalytic principle is used constantly in modern psychiatry aside from the use of psychoanalysis as a treatment method. The technical ways in which this is done with patients<sup>2</sup> need not occupy us here, but the fact that it *is* done is important to know since it guarantees the

<sup>2</sup> My brother, William C. Menninger, has devoted himself to the study of this problem for years and has classified some of the techniques in numerous scientific articles. In psychiatric practice emphasis is placed on initiating activities which enable the patient to disperse his aggressions in socially approved ways. This method is preferable for individuals who cannot accept deep psychological insight into their destructiveness.

validity of the principle that such a rearrangement of instinctual expression is possible, granted sufficient opportunity and a sufficient degree of insight on the part of the individual himself.

In tracing the final distribution of the aggressive tendencies or destructive instinct, we should make mention of that peculiarly human phenomenon, the conscience. According to psychoanalytic theory, the conscience is an internalized censor, exercising an influence upon the decisions of the ego similar to the voice of the parents and teachers in childhood. A part of it appears to be conscious, and holds up certain ideals; but judging from consequences, it is certain that a larger part of it is unconscious and acts in a punitive, bargaining, often cruel and dishonest way. This is not the place for an extended discussion of the super-ego and ego-ideal, more technical terms for the unconscious and conscious consciences, respectively. But it is important to stress the fact that the power exerted by this disparate portion of the ego is supplied by the aggressive instinct. As I have explained in *Man Against Himself*, it is as if certain criminals in a community had reformed and turned policemen. For this reason, highly conscientious people (for example, Cotton Mather) are so often cruel, harsh, destructive people. They are often even more severe with themselves than with others, although this seems less important to the world. The time will surely come when the supposed virtues of conscientiousness will be more carefully scrutinized and the superiority of intelligence over blind (and corruptible) conscience more generally acknowledged. At present, however, this is too much to expect—the more so when one recalls how religious systems have grown and thrived on the exploitations of a (false) sense of guilt inculcated by a cultivated conscience.

We may summarize, then, the fate of the aggressive energy in the theoretical "normal" person in whom it has been properly neutralized by love thus: Some of it has been completely repressed; some is expressed directly in self-defense or protection of others; some is expressed in sublimations; some is internalized as "conscience." In the less normal individual we would have to allow for the portion which is directly expressed against others as cruelty, theft, murder, provocativeness, and the like, as well as that which is directed back against the self as depression, neurosis, and suicide. . . . We must also seek to discover the ways in which love can be better invested, for only to the extent that we love do we live, and only love can combat the trend toward a return to the inorganic silence from which we have temporarily emerged. In support of love, we have Faith and Hope. Thus the keys to the rupture of the vicious circle are Work and Play; Faith, Hope, and Love.

## SEX EX MACHINA

*James Thurber (1937)*

WITH the disappearance of the gas mantle and the advent of the short circuit, man's tranquility began to be threatened by everything he put his hand on. Many people believe that it was a sad day indeed when Benjamin Franklin tied that key to a kite string and flew the kite in a thunderstorm; other people believe that if it hadn't been Franklin, it would have been someone else. As, of course, it was in the case of the harnessing of steam and the invention of the gas engine. At any rate, it has come about that so-called civilized man finds himself today surrounded by the myriad mechanical devices of a technological world. Writers of books on how to control your nerves, how to conquer fear, how to cultivate calm, how to be happy in spite of everything, are of several minds as regards the relation of man and the machine. Some of them are prone to believe that the mind and body, if properly disciplined, can get the upper hand of this mechanized existence. Others merely ignore the situation and go on to the profitable writing of more facile chapters of inspiration. Still others attribute the whole menace of the machine to sex, and so confuse the average reader that he cannot always be certain whether he has been knocked down by an automobile or is merely in love.

Dr. Bisch, the Be-Glad-You're-Neurotic man, has a remarkable chapter which deals, in part, with man, sex, and the machine. He examines the case of three hypothetical men who start across a street on a red light and get in the way of an oncoming automobile. A dodges successfully; B stands still, "accepting the situation with calm and resignation," thus becoming one of my favorite heroes in modern belles-lettres; and C hesitates, wavers, jumps backward and forward, and finally runs head-on into the car. To lead you through Dr. Bisch's complete analysis of what was wrong with B and C would occupy your whole day. He mentions what the McDougallians would say ("Instinct!"), what the Freudians would retort ("Complexes!", and what the behaviorists would shout ("Conditioned reflexes!"). He also brings in what the physiologists would say—deficient thyroid, hypoadrenal functioning, and so on. The average sedentary man of our time who is at all suggestible must emerge from this chapter believing that his chances of surviving a combination of instinct, complexes, reflexes, glands, sex, and present-day traffic conditions are about equal to those of a one-legged blind man trying to get out of a labyrinth.

Let us single out what Dr. Bisch thinks the Freudians would say about poor Mr. C, who ran right into the car. He writes, "Sex hunger," the Freudians would declare. 'Always keyed up and irritable because of it. Undoubtedly suffers from insomnia and when he does sleep his dream life must be productive, distorted, and possibly frightening. Automobile unques-

tionably has sex significance for him . . . to C the car is both enticing and menacing at one and the same time. . . . A thorough analysis is indicated. . . . It might take months. But then, the man needs an analysis as much as food. He is heading for a complete nervous collapse.'” It is my studied opinion, not to put too fine a point on it, that Mr. C is heading for a good mangling, and that if he gets away with only a nervous collapse, it will be a miracle.

I have not always, I am sorry to say, been able to go the whole way with the Freudians, or even a very considerable distance. Even though, as Dr. Bisch says, “One must admit that the Freudians have had the best of it thus far. At least they have received the most publicity.” It is in matters like their analysis of men and machines, of Mr. C and the automobile, that the Freudians and I part company. Of course, the analysis above is simply Dr. Bisch’s idea of what the Freudians would say, but I think he has got it down pretty well. Dr. Bisch himself leans toward the Freudian analysis of Mr. C, for he says in this same chapter, “An automobile bearing down upon you may be a sex symbol at that, you know, especially if you dream it.” It is my contention, of course, that even if you dream it, it is probably not a sex symbol, but merely an automobile bearing down upon you. And if it bears down upon you in real life, I am sure it is an automobile. I have seen the same behavior that characterized Mr. C displayed by a squirrel (Mr. S) that lives in the grounds of my house in the country. He is a fairly tame squirrel, happily mated and not sex-hungry, if I am any judge, but nevertheless he frequently runs out toward my automobile when I start down the driveway, and then hesitates, wavers, jumps forward and backward, and occasionally would run right into the car except that he is awfully fast on his feet and that I always hurriedly put on the brakes of the 1935 V-8 Sex Symbol that I drive.

I have seen this same behavior in the case of rabbits (notoriously uninfluenced by any sex symbols save those of other rabbits), dogs, pigeons, a doe, a young hawk (which flew at my car), a blue heron that I encountered on a country road in Vermont, and once, near Paul Smiths in the Adirondacks, a fox. They all acted exactly like Mr. C. The hawk, unhappily, was killed. All the others escaped with nothing worse, I suppose, than a complete nervous collapse. Although I cannot claim to have been conversant with the private life and the secret compulsions, the psychoneuroses and the glandular activities of all these animals, it is nevertheless my confident and unswervable belief that there was nothing at all the matter with any one of them. Like Mr. C, they suddenly saw a car swiftly bearing down upon them, got excited, and lost their heads. I do not believe, you see, there was anything the matter with Mr. C, either. But I do believe that, after a thorough analysis lasting months, with a lot of harping on the incident of the automobile, something might very well come to be the matter with him. He might even actually get to suffering from the delusion that he believes automobiles are sex symbols.



It seems to me worthy of note that Dr. Bisch, in reciting the reactions of three persons in the face of an oncoming car, selected three men. What would have happened had they been Mrs. A, Mrs. B, and Mrs. C? You know as well as I do: all three of them would have hesitated, wavered, jumped forward and backward, and finally run head-on into the car if some man hadn't grabbed them. (I used to know a motorist who, every time he approached a woman standing on a curb preparing to cross the street, shouted, "Hold it, stupid!") It is not too much to say that, with a car bearing down upon them, ninety-five women out of a hundred would act like Mr. C—or Mr. S, the squirrel, or Mr. F, the fox. But it is certainly too much to say that ninety-five out of every hundred women look upon an automobile as a sex symbol. For one thing, Dr. Bisch points out that the automobile serves as a sex symbol because of the "mechanical principle involved." But only one woman in a thousand really knows anything about the mechanical principle involved in an automobile. And yet, as I have said, ninety-five out of a hundred would hesitate, waver, and jump, just as Mr. C did. I think we have the Freudians here. If we haven't proved our case with rabbits and a blue heron, we have certainly proved it with women.

To my notion, the effect of the automobile and of other mechanical contrivances on the state of our nerves, minds, and spirits is a problem which the popular psychologists whom I have dealt with know very little about. The sexual explanation of the relationship of man and the machine is not good enough. To arrive at the real explanation, we have to begin very far back, as far back as Franklin and the kite, or at least as far back as a certain man and woman who appear in a book of stories written more than sixty years ago by Max Adeler. One story in this book tells about a housewife who bought a combination ironing board and card table, which some New England genius had thought up in his spare time. The husband, coming home to find the devilish contraption in the parlor, was appalled. "What is that thing?" he demanded. His wife explained that it was a card table, but that if you pressed a button underneath, it would become an ironing board. Whereupon she pushed the button and the table leaped a foot into the air, extended itself, and became an ironing board. The story goes on to tell how the thing finally became so finely sensitized that it would change back and forth if you merely touched it—you didn't have to push the button. The husband stuck it in the attic (after it had leaped up and struck him a couple of times while he was playing euchre), and on windy nights it could be heard flopping and banging around, changing from a card table to an ironing board and back. The story serves as one example of our dread heritage of annoyance, shock, and terror arising out of the nature of mechanical contrivances *per se*. The mechanical principle involved in this damnable invention had, I believe, no relationship to sex whatsoever. There are certain analysts who see sex in anything, even a leaping ironing board, but I think we can ignore these scientists.

No man (to go on) who has wrestled with a self-adjusting card table can ever be quite the man he once was. If he arrives at the state where he hesitates, wavers, and jumps at every mechanical device he encounters, it is not, I submit, because he recognizes the enticements of sex in the device, but only because he recognizes the menace of the machine as such. There might very well be, in every descendant of the man we have been discussing, an inherited desire to jump at, and conquer, mechanical devices before they have a chance to turn into something twice as big and twice as menacing. It is not reasonable to expect that his children and their children will have entirely escaped the stigma of such traumata. I myself will never be the man I once was, nor will my descendants probably ever amount to much, because of a certain experience I had with an automobile.

I had gone out to the barn of my country place, a barn which was used both as a garage and a kennel, to quiet some large black poodles. It was 1 A.M. of a pitch-dark night in winter and the poodles had apparently been terrified by some kind of a prowler, a tramp, a turtle, or perhaps a fiend of some sort. Both my poodles and I myself believed, at the time, in fiends, and still do. Fiends who materialize out of nothing and nowhere, like winged pigweed or Russian thistle. I had quite a time quieting the dogs, because their panic spread to me and mine spread back to them again, in a kind of vicious circle. Finally, a hush as ominous as their uproar fell upon them, but they kept looking over their shoulders, in a kind of apprehensive way. "There's nothing to be afraid of," I told them as firmly as I could, and just at that moment the klaxon of my car, which was just behind me, began to shriek. Everybody has heard a klaxon on a car suddenly begin to sound; I understand it is a short circuit that causes it. But very few people have heard one scream behind them while they were quieting six or eight alarmed poodles in the middle of the night in an old barn. I jump now whenever I hear a klaxon, even the klaxon on my own car when I push the button intentionally. The experience has left its mark. Everybody, from the day of the jumping card table to the day of the screaming klaxon, has had similar shocks. You can see the result, entirely unsuperinduced by sex, in the strained faces and muttering lips of people who pass you on the streets of great, highly mechanized cities. There goes a man who picked up one of those trick matchboxes that whirl in your hands; there goes a woman who tried to change a fuse without turning off the current; and yonder toddles an ancient who cranked an old Reo with the spark advanced. Every person carries in his consciousness the old scar, or the fresh wound, of some harrowing misadventure with a contraption of some sort. I know people who would not deposit a nickel and a dime in a cigarette-vending machine and push the lever even if a diamond necklace came out. I know dozens who would not climb into an airplane even if it didn't move off the ground. In none of these people have I discerned what I would call a neurosis, an "exaggerated" fear;

I have discerned only a natural caution in a world made up of gadgets that whirl and whine and whiz and shriek and sometimes explode.

I should like to end with the case history of a friend of mine in Ohio named Harvey Lake. When he was only nineteen, the steering bar of an old electric runabout broke off in his hand, causing the machine to carry him through a fence and into the grounds of the Columbus School for Girls. He developed a fear of automobiles, trains, and every other kind of vehicle that was not pulled by a horse. Now, the psychologists would call this a complex and represent the fear as abnormal, but I see it as a purely reasonable apprehension. If Harvey Lake had, because he was catapulted into the grounds of the Columbus School for Girls, developed a fear of girls, I would call that a complex; but I don't call his normal fear of machines a complex. Harvey Lake never in his life got into a plane (he died in a fall from a porch), but I do not regard that as neurotic, either, but only sensible.

I have, to be sure, encountered men with complexes. There was, for example, Marvin Belt. He had a 'complex about airplanes that was quite interesting. He was not afraid of machinery, or of high places, or of crashes. He was simply afraid that the pilot of any plane he got into might lose his mind. "I imagine myself high over Montana," he once said to me, "in a huge, perfectly safe tri-motored plane. Several of the passengers are dozing, others are reading, but I am keeping my eyes glued on the door to the cockpit. Suddenly the pilot steps out of it, a wild light in his eyes, and in a falsetto like that of a little girl he says to me, 'Conductor, will you please let me off at One-Hundred-and-Twenty-fifth Street?' " "But," I said to Belt, "even if the pilot does go crazy, there is still the co-pilot." "No, there isn't," said Belt. "The pilot has hit the co-pilot over the head with something and killed him." Yes, the psychoanalysts can have Marvin Belt. But they can't have Harvey Lake, or Mr. C, or Mr. S, or Mr. F, or, while I have my strength, me.

## THE HIGH PLATEAUX OF ASIA

(*From Raw Material*)

*Oliver La Farge (1941)*

A NUMBER of factors entered to pave the way for one of those flukes which direct the course of one's entire life. We frequently recognize what an amazing accident it is that a given man should marry a particular woman, the couples themselves are usually aware of this and will comment on it, and we all acknowledge how fundamental in its effects this accident is. The public won't let novelists depict most of the other major developments of life as prey to equally pure chance, fiction dare not be as strange as truth, and as a

matter of fact most of us don't realize what featherweight dips of the balance of events control our lives.

There is always a build-up, of course; one's situation has evolved to the point at which it is susceptible to chance if chance occurs. I had a bookish background, my mother encouraged us to read widely and to cultivate doubt of authority and intellectual curiosity. We had the habit of reading and weren't afraid of studying matters supposed to be beyond our years. One learned to be cagey about this at Groton; an intellectual interest, a highbrow taste was dangerous for anyone, an unpopular boy might have an unpleasant time if his fellows caught him busy with too deep a matter, but with a really good library at our disposal, it was possible with reasonable precaution to follow one's interests and educate one's self.

A little train had been fired in my mind at Saint Bernard's, where I studied before I went to Groton. In that remarkable school they were not afraid to expose children's minds to college-level concepts; the instruction there was intended to form an education. Among other things, I was given a vague idea of the relationship between English and Latin, the formation of French from Latin, the march of Romance words into English. There was the idea of language not as a finished thing but as an orderly, continuing process.

The idea of process and order, causes and effects, meets a desire in the minds of many children trying to puzzle out the world. To that was added something, again vague, which caught the imagination and spoke to the same faculty which makes a writer—the vision of ancient, far-off, tremendous happenings, of the march of primitive, great, bearded men out of Asia, the wagons and the cattle in motion as whole nations marched slowly, blindly to new lands, of wars and new migrations, tide on tide. Here too were beginnings and a process, the common roots from which by a turn to the right or the left in the long march could come the Greeks or the Vikings. It was not just a coincidence that Socrates' pun,  $\nu\eta\ \chi\alpha\upsilon\varsigma$ , worked when translated into English; back of that fact lay what I did not then think of as evolution but in which I sensed ordered change for reason, and it reached to the high plateaux of Asia and campfires beside the wagons where the imagination could range and the mind wander.

It was a little train and a stimulant not well understood; it was a long time before the train reached explosive material.

It happened that my mother sent me at Groton a clipping of a review by Theodore Roosevelt of Osborn's *Men of the Old Stone Age*. She knew I'd shown a boyish curiosity about Stone Age man and sent this to me because it was written by one friend about the work of another. The review was an article in itself and made me want the book. I was fifteen (this happened shortly after my fight with Brown). Once I got my hands on the book the direction of my life began to be determined.

It was now that the spark of that early train reached the explosive. The

real concept of evolution, the answer to Sunday-paper claptrap about the missing link, process and cause and sequence carried far back of the Aryan-speaking migrations, the mind's desire for order and understanding combined with a tremendous field in which the imagination could roam, not with the curious unsatisfaction of your pure daydream but purposefully, deductively, with a backbone of fact and a lure of theory—in other words, speculation.

I did not merely read this book; I studied it. Although I ended by taking a couple of degrees in Anthropology I never sat in a formal course on the Stone Age of Europe, yet the grounding I got from this book was so firm that later it was easy for me to fit in the changing theories and new discoveries as I learned of them, so that I still have, for an ethnologist, a pretty fair, generalized grasp of this branch of my science—as much at least as if I had taken the usual undergraduate course on the subject.

The book took me into Darwin. From *The Descent of Man* I learned how to wiggle my ears, practising assiduously during Sunday sermons in Chapel according to the principles of Darwin laid down for the restoration of obsolete muscles. Then Osborn's *Origin and Evolution of Life* came out and I fell upon it.

*Men of the Old Stone Age* began with a creature, *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, who was nearly enough human to swat his fellows over the head with a club. The new book began at the beginning. As a matter of fact it was largely beyond my comprehension but I was ignorant enough not to realize that and I found it, too, exciting. Without realizing it at all I was discovering what every good scientist knows and finds so difficult to communicate to other men: that when approached without prejudice, questions which people have *learned* to classify as dry, dusty, and even repellent, have not only the fascination of difficult puzzles, mental exercises, detective stories, but tremendous colour and romance and vast spaces calling for the imagination to sweep in. It was there for me in the transition from anaerobic to aerobic bacteria and the pinpoint, the inconceivably minute line and inconceivably enormous change from a chemical reaction to life, in the archeopteryx and the cynodont pointing the way to the shape of animal life as we know it today, in the mutations of de Vries and Waagen.

What happened to me happens to lots of bright boys. As I have said, the book was much too deep for me. I could understand it in spots and I could get from it an over-all picture, a generalized idea which was crudely correct. I was so ignorant and my mind so untrained that it was easy for me to gloss over my misunderstandings and plain incomprehensions by a glib surface reading of words and again and again short-circuit ideas with which I could not hope to cope by fantastically naïve reinterpretations of the text.

Even that was not come by easily. *Origin and Evolution of Life* was a formidable presentation of a formidable subject. I have since retreated gratefully to the confines of Anthropology and content myself with a somewhat amateurish defense, at times, of Wood-Jones's theory of arboreal man. I soon

found that I was reading whole pages without retaining a word. This would never do; a remedy must be found. There was some "required reading" in our courses at School but no training to equip one for *teaching one's self*. I hit on what I believed to be a totally original notion—I made myself take notes on every page I read. Recently I ran across the notebook, a small, red one which could be concealed in the pocket quickly, with its page by page, naïve summaries (but not much worse than undergraduate work), the diagrams carefully and almost neatly copied to scale.

Behold the schoolboy—I'm almost finished with him now. He is sixteen, he has recently spent an agonizing week in Coventry, he is the Bop I have described. High-jumping is just beginning to become his achievement, at night he finds refuge from misery in the escapes and wild fancies told of earlier, his clear ambition is a uniform, a commission, and the front line, and he would gladly die in action. He also dreams of making the first squad in football and considers winning his letter too high an ambition to torment his mind with. He is romantically in love with a girl he met last Christmas. He sits, bespectacled, a cowlick rising umbrageously from his head, ink on his fingers and on his nose, secretly summarizing an advanced work on biology and evolution into a small notebook while his studies go to pot. All these elements and many more go to make him up, and it is he by the thousand whom masters, parents, graduates and writers summarize so quickly and so glibly.

When I was ready for college I thought of becoming an historian. I had fallen upon Hakluyt's *Voyages*, read them nearly straight through, and embarked upon a twofold study of Elizabethan seafaring and the history of the sailing vessel. This might have been the most natural choice I could have made; its alliance to writing is obvious, and already my secret ambition was to be a writer. Had I made it, my life would have been unthinkable different. But I had read *Men of the Old Stone Age* first. The other was a delightful occupation. Science stood forth as a vocation. Even in that there were manifold choices—Paleontology, Evolutionary Biology, Physical Anthropology and Archaeology all were pertinent to my interest. *The Origin and Evolution of Life* had been just a little too tough for me; *Men of the Old Stone Age*, reread, was well within my grasp. I chose Archaeology, and specifically the archaeology of paleolithic France. In this I was conscious of a gentle pressure, my mother's feeling about a professor in the family. My real decision was that I should start in this direction and see what happened.

The authorities at Harvard tested the strength of my interest by the simple method of sending me on an expedition to Arizona, to see what long hours wielding a shovel in the hot sun would bring out of me. Various other factors came into play at the same time that the Navajos dawned upon me, and without even being conscious of having made a vital change I settled upon Ethnology. I also fell in love with the Southwest and made the first

steps in breaking out of the protected, secure provincialism of the nicely brought up Northeastern American.

Through my own indiscipline I got in bad with the powers that were in Southwestern research, and at a critical time found it impossible to get a post in that work. By sheer chance I met a Dane, Frans Blom, who was going to Mexico and Guatemala for Tulane University. He took a shine to me and hired me as his assistant. He was a fine scientist, a real explorer, and a natural teacher. New Orleans became my home, my specialty the Mayan Indians of the high, mountain country. Spanish became my second tongue, so much so that I can no longer speak Italian and my French is sadly corrupted. Those Indians remain my special subject to this day; had I continued earning my living as an anthropologist I should have visited those mountains year after year; as it is, I know them better than I do the northern half of my native state and had Pearl Harbor not occurred I should be there now. Thus one "chooses" his career.

What is Science? What is the special nature of a scientist as distinguished from a soda-jerker? Not just the externals of teaching classes, unconsciously using a trick vocabulary, seeking information about such things as the distribution of plumbate pottery in northwestern Guatemala, but the formation within the man that gives a writer something he can set his teeth in? There's been a lot of rot written about scientists in fiction. The reality can be found in rare works like *Eve Curie's*. When I think of the hard-drinking gentlemen and delightful companions who are my colleagues in Maya research I find them quite unlike the folk-picture.

The internal nature of science within the scientist is both emotional and intellectual. The emotional element must not be overlooked, for there is no sound research on no matter how odd and dull-seeming a detail without it. An emotion shapes and informs the scientist's life, an intellectual discipline molds his thinking, stamping him with a character as marked as a seaman's although much less widely understood.

We can get at the man partly through his work, considering it in its wide context, although much of the time the man himself, in his intensive study of a single tree, not only can't see the forest but forgets all about it. He is an ant, putting forth great efforts to lug one insignificant and apparently unimportant grain of sand to be added to a pile, and much of the time his struggle seems as pointless as an ant's. I can try to explain why he does it and what the long-term purpose is behind it through an example from my own work. Remember that in this I am not thinking of the rare, fortunate geniuses like the Curies, Darwin or Newton, who by their own talents and the apex of accumulated thought at which they found themselves were knowingly in the pursuit of great, major discoveries or theories. This is the average scientist, one among thousands, obscure, unimportant, toilsome.

I have put in a good many months of hard work which ought by usual standards to have been dull but was not, on an investigation, as yet unfinished,

to prove that Kanhobal, spoken by certain Indians in Guatemala, is not a dialect of Jacalteca, but that on the contrary Jacalteca is a dialect of Kanhobal. Ridiculous, isn't it? Yet to me the matter is not only serious, but exciting. Why?

There's an item of glory. There are half a dozen or so men living today (some, alas, now our enemies) who will respect me for adding to the linguistic map of Central America the name of a hitherto unnoted dialect, spoken by about twelve thousand people. Bear that matter of the respect of six or eight men in mind; it will come up again.

There's the nature of the initial work. I have spent hours, deadly, difficult hours, extracting lists of words, paradigms of verbs, constructions, idioms, and the rest from native informants, often at night in over-ventilated huts while my hands turned blue with cold. (Those mountains are far from tropical.) An illiterate Indian tires quickly when giving linguistic information. He is not accustomed to thinking of words in terms of other words; his command of Spanish is very poor so that again and again you labour over misunderstanding; he does not think in our categories of words. Take any schoolchild and ask him how you say, "I go." Then ask him, in turn, "thou goest, he goes, we go," and so forth. Even the most elementary schooling has taught him, if only from the force of what he has seen on a printed page, to think in terms of the present tense of a single verb, and he will give you—in Spanish for instance—"Me voy, te vas, se va, nos vamos," and so on. Try this on an illiterate Indian. He gives you his equivalent of "I go," follows it, perhaps, with "thou goest," but the next question reminds him of his son's departure that morning for Ixtatán so he says, "He sets out," and from that by another mental leap produces "We are on a journey." This presents the investigator with a magnificently irregular verb. He starts checking back, and the Indian's mind having moved into a new channel, he now gets "I am on a journey" instead of "I go."

There follows an exhausting process of inserting an alien concept into the mind of a man with whom you are communicating tenuously in a language which you speak only pretty well and he quite badly.

Then, of course, you come to a verb which really is irregular and you mistrust it. Both of you become tired, frustrated, upset. At the end of an hour or so the Indian is worn out, his friendship for you has materially decreased, and you yourself are glad to quit.

Hours and days of this, and it's not enough. I have put my finger upon the village of Santa Eulalia and said, "Here is the true, the classic Kanhobal from which the other dialects diverge." Then I must sample the others; there are at least eight villages which must yield me up word-lists ample enough to show about where they fit in the general pattern; there are two from which my material must be as full as from Santa Eulalia. More hours and more days, long horseback trips across the mountains to enter a strange, suspicious settlement, sleep on the dirt floor of the schoolhouse, and persuade the local



boys that it is a good idea, a delightful idea, that you should put "The Tongue" into writing. Bad food, a bout of malaria, and the early morning horror of seeing your beloved horse's neck running blood from vampire bats (Oh, but yes, señor, here are very troublesome the vampire bats), to get the raw material for proving that Jacalteca is a dialect of Kanhobal instead of . . .

You bring your hard-won data back to the States and you follow up with a sort of detective-quest for obscure publications and old manuscripts that may show a couple of words of the language as it was spoken a few centuries ago, so that you can get a line on its evolution. With great labour you unearth and read the very little that has ever been written bearing upon this particular problem.

By now the sheer force of effort expended gives your enterprise value in your own eyes.

But the real drive is greater than all these. Suppose I complete my work and prove, in fact, that Kanhobal as spoken in Santa Eulalia is, first, a language in its own right, and second, the classic tongue from which Jacalteca has diverged under alien influences, and that further I show just where the gradations of speech in the intervening villages fit in. Dear God, what a small, dull grain of sand.

Follow the matter a little further. Jacalteca being relatively well-known (I can, offhand, specify four men who have given it consideration), from it it has been deduced that this whole group of dialects is most closely related to the languages spoken south and east of these mountains. If my thesis is correct the reverse is true, the language belongs to the Northern Division of the Mayan Family. This fact, taken along with others regarding physical appearance, ancient remains, and present culture, leads to a new conclusion about the direction from which these people came into the mountains; a fragment of the ancient history of what was once a great, civilized people comes into view. So now my tiny contribution begins to be of help to men working in other branches of Anthropology than my own, particularly the archaeologists. It begins to help towards an eventual understanding of the whole picture in this area, the important question of, not what these people are today, but how they got that way and why, and what can we learn from that about all human behaviour, including our own?

Carrying this bit of research thus far brings me to the limits of my capacities, but its results would presumably be exploited by men of greater attainments. Sticking to the linguistic line, an error has been cleared away, an advance has been made in our understanding of the layout and inter-relationship of the many languages making up the Mayan Family. With that we come a step nearer to working out the processes by which these languages became different one from another (my beloved processes again) and hence to determining the archaic, ancestral roots of the whole group.

So far as we know at present there are not less than eight completely unrelated language families in America north of Panama. This is unreason-

able; there are hardly that many families among all the peoples of the Old World. Twenty years ago we recognized not eight, but forty. Some day perhaps we shall cut the total to four. The understanding of the Mayan process is a step towards that day; it is likely that one day Mayan will prove to be anciently related to at least one of the others. We know now that certain tribes in Wyoming speak languages akin to those of certain others in Panama, we have charted the big masses and the islands of that group of tongues, and from the chart begin to see the outlines of great movements and major historical events in the dim past. If we should similarly develop a relationship between Mayan and, say, languages of the Mississippi Valley and Labrador, again we offer something provocative and helpful to the archaeologist, the historian, the student of mankind. Perhaps some day we shall show a provable relationship between some of these families and certain languages of the Old World and with it cast a new light on the dim subject of the peopling of the Americas, something to guide our minds back past the Arctic to dark tribes moving blindly from the high plateaux of Asia.

My petty detail has its place in a long project carried out by many men which will serve not only the history of language but the broad scope of history itself. It goes further than that. The humble Pah-Utes of Nevada speak a tongue related to that which the subtle Montezuma used, the one narrow in scope, evolved only to meet the needs of a primitive people, the other sophisticated, a capable instrument for poetry, for an advanced governmental system, and for philosophical speculation. Men's thoughts make language and their languages make thoughts. When the matter of the speech of mankind is fully known and laid side by side with the other knowledges, the philosophers, the men who stand at the gathering-together points of science, will have the means to make man understand himself at last.<sup>1</sup>

In this description I have allowed myself some fantasy and a bit of exaggeration to convey in a crude way the concept, the drive, that underlies the scientist's work. The emotions of curiosity, of combativeness against difficulty, and the pleasure of using one's faculties for all they're worth are involved; these are rewards along the way, but the great, guiding emotion is in this vision of future understanding, something to be attained by other men and for the far future, towards which he can make his little contribution, of which he can now and again catch a thrilling, prophetic glimpse.

This enterprise goes on under a severe discipline of emotion as well as mind. The investigator is interested in disclosing the truth, not in proving himself right, which means that from time to time he has to accept agonizing sacrifices. Thus, I might complete an unassailable job of proving my Kan-hobal idea and be ready to publish it, or even have published it, seen it generally accepted, cited by other workers, my own reputation enhanced. Then

<sup>1</sup> In the back of Hayakawa's *Language in Action* is an article by my colleague, the late B. L. Whorf, which gives an exciting glimpse of the broad understanding to be reached at the end of countless tiny studies.

one day there might be brought to my attention a forgotten manuscript by Fray Juan de Fulano, written in 1678, containing a brief grammar and vocabulary of the language of the people of Santa Eulalia which proved conclusively, in a manner that no logical analysis of modern data could overthrow, that in the sixteen-seventies the Santa Eulalia Indians spoke pure, slightly archaic Jacalteca clearly related to the Southern Division of the Mayan stock.

Of course I could burn the manuscript and keep my mouth shut, just as I might murder my mother for her insurance. As a matter of fact my best out is to publish the manuscript myself, and myself destroy my own theory. If I am a good scientist, about halfway through the moral struggle I shall become intrigued with the wider significances growing out of this proven, Southern relationship, my mind will begin to follow lines of argument, I shall see a rather nifty little publication, requiring some six months of absorbed work to prepare, to be entitled *The Evolution of an Atypical Highland Mayan Dialect in Post-Columbian Times*, and along about the time when I should be coming to a rather noble decision I shall have forgotten about the decision in the resurgence of the scientist's fundamental emotional drive.

It's more painful when a colleague makes the upsetting discovery. If he be a good fellow, and the matter to be upset one of importance, he'll communicate with you and offer you the privilege of helping him tear down your own evidence. It takes some of the sting out of the proof that La Farge was wrong, misinterpreted some of the evidence, and overlooked a couple of important bets, to have the article showing this contain expressions of gratitude to you for your help and quote a letter from you making a contribution to the new thesis.

It happened that when I was a pup anthropologist I ran across a copy of a manuscript supposed to have disappeared and, following a lead, unearthed three more versions of it, a grammar and vocabulary of the now extinct Chol language of Guatemala compiled by a Fray Morán between 1670 and 1690. The Choles occupied a keystone position geographically in the Maya Area, so that the question of their speech and its relationships is an important one. The last and best word on the subject was an article *Choles und Chortis*, published in 1915 by Doctor Carl Sapper, one of the great veterans and deans in our field. In his article he spoke of the "lost" Morán Manuscript.

A brief study of it showed that Doctor Sapper had been quite mistaken. Crudely speaking, he had tried to reconstruct Chol of 1600 from six words recorded by the leader of a Spanish military expedition plus a list of words he had made in a modern Chorti village. Chorti *used to be* the same as Chol except that it substituted *r* wherever *l* appeared in the other language—but that was several centuries ago.

His article, written in German, containing many words in Spanish and many in Indian dialects, had been printed in Quebec (in itself a document on the nature of science when wars leave it alone), and was clearly full of

printer's errors. To make my disproof of his thesis waterproof I needed to have these errors cleared up, and I needed more Chorti.

In 1928 Doctor Carl Sapper was old and famous, he was President of Würzburg University; a mere list of his publications would fill several pages of this book. Everybody who could get hold of a copy carried his *Nördliche Mittelamerika* with him in the field and kept it handy to his desk at home. I was an unknown beginner, still lacking credits for my master's degree, holding a lowly post in a new, obscure, unproven institution, and had published one six-page article on certain Jacalteca ceremonies. So I wrote to him, in my best Spanish (which was not very good).

He answered promptly, beginning by expressing his delight that I had found the Morán Manuscript, continuing to correct the printer's errors in his article, and finally offering to send me all his manuscript field notes bearing on the subject, and ending with cordial good wishes. He addressed me as "my dear colleague." From then until the Nazis finally ended all such intercommunication, while he presided over Würzburg and after he had retired, we continued a delightful, sporadic correspondence and I still treasure the fan-letter he wrote me after he read the German translation of *Laughing Boy*.

This is the cream of science. Hooton of Harvard once remarked to me that scientists, or at least anthropologists, should not complain of the poor salaries they got; they should be grateful that the universities didn't charge them for the privilege of doing such enjoyable work. He wasn't far from right.

Even in describing the work itself this matter of one's colleagues and the half dozen men I mentioned earlier keeps creeping in. To understand that one must first understand the isolation of research, a factor which has profound effects upon the scientist's psyche.

The most obvious statement of this is in the public attitude and our folk-literature about "professors." (Folk-literature is a polite name for the work of lazy-minded, slack-souled writers who go through life exploiting the readily accepted stock characters of folklore without the curiosity or the integrity to seek out the truth.) The titles and subjects of Ph.D. theses have long been the causes of a sort of exasperated humour among us; we are all familiar with the writer's device which ascribes to a professorial character an intense interest in some such matter as the development of the molars in pre-Aurignacian man or the religious sanctions of the Levirate in northeastern Australia, the writer's intention being that the reader shall say, "Oh, God!" smile slightly, and pigeonhole the character. But what do you suppose is the effect of the quite natural public attitude behind these devices upon the man who is excitedly interested in pre-Aurignacian molars and who knows that, as a matter of fact, it is a study of key value in tracing the development of *Homo Sapiens*?

Occasionally some line of research is taken up and made clear, even

fascinating, to the general public—De Kruif's writings, objectionable though they are in some ways; Zinsser's splendid *Rats, Lice, and History*. Usually, as in the cases cited, they deal with medicine or some other line of work directly resulting in findings of vital interest to the public. Then the ordinary man will consent to understand, if not the steps of the research itself, at least their importance, will grant their excitement, and honour the researcher. When we read Eve Curie's great biography of her parents, our approach to it is coloured by our knowledge, forty years later, of the importance of their discovery to every one of us. It would have been quite possible at the time for a malicious or merely ignorant writer to have presented that couple as archetypes of the "professor," performing incomprehensible acts of self-immolation in pursuit of an astronomically unimportant what's-it.

Diving to my own experience like a Stuka with a broken wing, I continue to take my examples from my rather shallow linguistic studies because, in its very nature, the kind of thing a linguist studies is so beautifully calculated to arouse the "Oh, God!" emotion. It happened that at the suggestion of my betters I embarked upon an ambitious, general comparative study of the whole Mayan Family. I found to my delight that I could get a lot of drawing into the work, having stumbled upon a way of representing the phonetic system of each language by a graph, and prepared a very fancy diagram showing the laws governing sound shifts within the stock. This released a never greatly suppressed desire to use three colours of ink on one page.

The further in I got the further there was to go and the more absorbed I became. Puzzle piled upon puzzle to be worked out and the solution used for getting after the next one, the beginning of order in chaos, the glimpse of understanding at the far end. Memory, reasoning faculties, realism, and imagination were all on the stretch; I was discovering the full reach of whatever mental powers I had. When I say that I became absorbed I mean absorbed; the only way to do such research is to roll in it, become soaked in it, live it, breathe it, have your system so thoroughly permeated with it that at the half glimpse of a fugitive possibility everything you have learned so far and everything you have been holding in suspension is in order and ready to prove or disprove that point. You do not only think about your subject while the documents are spread before you; everyone knows that some of our best reasoning is done when the surface of the mind is occupied with something else and the deep machinery of the brain is free to work unhampered.

One day I was getting aboard a trolley car on my way to the University. As I stepped up, I saw that if it were possible to prove that a prefixed *s*- could change into a prefixed *y*- a whole series of troublesome phenomena would fall into order. The transition must come through *u*- and, thought I with a sudden lift of excitement, there may be a breathing associated with *u*- and that may make the whole thing possible. As I paid the conductor I thought that the evidence I needed might exist in Totonac and Tarascan,

non-Mayan languages with which I was not familiar. The possibilities were so tremendous that my heart pounded and I was so preoccupied that I nearly sat in the Jim Crow section. Speculation was useless until I could reach the University and dig out the books, so after a while I calmed myself and settled to my morning ration of Popeye, who was then a new discovery, too. As a matter of fact the idea was no good, but the incident is a perfect example of the "professor mind."

Of course, if as I stepped onto the car it had dawned upon me that the reason my girl's behaviour last evening had seemed odd was that she had fallen for the Englishman we met, the incident wouldn't seem so funny, although the nature of the absorption, subconscious thinking, and realization would be the same in both cases.

I lived for a month with the letter *k*. If we have three words in Quiché, one of the major Mayan languages, beginning with *k*, in Kanhobal we are likely to find that one of these begins with *ch*. Moving further west and north, in Tzeltal one is likely to begin with *k*, one with *ch*, and the one which began with *ch* in Kanhobal to begin with *ts*. In Husateca, at the extreme northwest, they begin with *k*, *ts*, and plain *s* respectively. Why don't they all change alike? Which is the original form? Which way do these changes run, or from which point do they run both ways? Until those questions can be answered we cannot even guess at the form of the mother tongue from which these languages diverged, and at that point all investigation halts. Are these *k*'s in Quiché pronounced even faintly unlike? I noticed no difference between the two in Kanhobal, but then I wasn't listening for it. I wished someone properly equipped would go and listen to the Quiché Indians, and wondered if I could talk the University into giving me money enough to do so.

This is enough to give some idea of the nature of my work, and its uselessness for general conversation. My colleagues at Tulane were archaeologists. Shortly after I got up steam they warned me frankly that I had to stop trying to tell them about the variability of *k*, the history of Puctum *ty* or any similar matter. If I produced any results that they could apply, I could tell them about it, but apart from that I could keep my damned sound-shifts and intransitive infixes to myself; I was driving them nuts. My other friends on the faculty were a philosopher and two English professors. I was pursuing two girls at the time, but had not been drawn to either because of intellectual interests in common; my closest friends were two painters and a sculptor. The only person I could talk to was myself.

The cumulative effect of this non-communication was terrific. A strange, mute work, a thing crying aloud for discussion, emotional expression, the check and reassurance of another's point of view, turned in upon myself to boil and fume and throwing upon me the responsibility of being my own sole check, my own impersonal, external critic. When finally I came to New York on vacation, I went to see my Uncle John. He doesn't know Indian

languages but he is a student of linguistics, and I shall never forget the relief, the revelling pleasure, of pouring my work out to him.

So at his greatest strength, at the vital point of his life work, the scientist is cut off from communication with his fellow men. Instead, he has the society of two, six, or twenty men and women who are working in his specialty (in my field I once was in correspondence with two at once), with whom he corresponds, whose letters he receives like a lover, with whom when he meets them he wallows in an orgy of talk, the keen pleasure of conclusions and findings compared, matched, checked against one another, the pure joy of being really understood.

The praise and understanding of those two or six becomes for him the equivalent of public recognition. Around these few close colleagues is the larger group of workers in the same general field. They do not share with one in the steps of one's research, but they can read the results, tell in a general way if they have been soundly reached, and profit by them. To them McGarnigle "has shown" that there are traces of an ancient, dolichocephalic strain among the skeletal remains from Pusilhá, which is something they can use. Largely on the strength of his close colleagues' judgment of him, the word gets around that McGarnigle is a sound man. You can trust his work. He's the fellow you want to have analyze the material if you turn up an interesting bunch of skulls. All told, including men in allied fields who use his findings, some fifty scientists praise him; before them he has achieved international reputation. He will receive honours. It is even remotely possible that he might get a raise in salary.

McGarnigle disinters himself from a sort of fortress made of boxes full of skeletons in the cellar of Podunk University's Hall of Science, and emerges into the light of day to attend a Congress. At the Congress he delivers a paper entitled *Additional Evidence of Dolichocephaly among the Eighth Cycle Maya* before the Section on Physical Anthropology. In the audience are six archaeologists specializing in the Maya field, to whom these findings have a special importance, and twelve physical anthropologists, including Gruenwald of Eastern California, who is the only other man working on Maya remains.

After McGarnigle's paper comes Gruenwald's turn. Three other physical anthropologists, engaged in the study of the Greenland Eskimo, the Coastal Chinese, and Pleistocene Man of Lake Mojave respectively, come in. They slipped out for a quick one while McGarnigle was speaking because his Maya work is not particularly useful to them and they can read the paper later; what is coming next, with its important bearing on method and theory, they would hate to miss.

Gruenwald is presenting a perfectly horrible algebraic formula and a diagram beyond Rube Goldberg's wildest dream, showing *A Formula for Approximating the Original Indices of Artificially Deformed Crania*. The archaeologists depart hastily to hear a paper in their own section on *Indica-*

tions of an Early Quinary System at Uuxactún.<sup>1</sup> The formula is intensely exciting to McGarnigle because it was the custom of the ancient Mayas to remodel the heads of their children into shapes which they (erroneously) deemed handsomer than nature's. He and Gruenwald have been corresponding about this. At one point Gruenwald will speak of his colleague's experience in testing the formula; he has been looking forward to this moment for months.

After the day's sessions are over will come something else he has been looking forward to. He and Gruenwald, who have not seen each other in two years, go out and get drunk together. It is not that they never get drunk at home, but that now when in their cups they can be uninhibited, they can talk their own, private, treble-esoteric shop. It is an orgy of release.

In the course of their drinking it is likely—if an archaeologist or two from the area joins them it is certain—that the talk will veer from femoral pilasters and alveolar prognathism to personal experiences in remote sections of the Petén jungle. For in my science and a number of others there is yet another frustration. We go into the field and there we have interesting experiences. (The word "adventure" is taboo and "explore" is used very gingerly.) But the public mind has been poisoned by the outpouring of the LaVarres and Dyotts, it is laden with claptrap about big expeditions, dangers, hardships, hostile tribes, the lighting of red flares around the camp to keep the savages at bay, and God knows what rot. (I can speak freely about this because my own expeditions have been so unambitious and in such easy country that I don't come into the subject.) As a matter of fact it is generally true that *for a scientist on an expedition to have an adventure is evidence of a fault in his technique*. He's sent out to gather information, and he has no business getting into "a brush with the natives."

The red flare, into-the-unknown, hardship-and-danger boys, who manage to find a tribe of pink and green Indians, a lost city, or the original, hand-painted descendants of the royal Incas every time they go out, usually succeed in so riling the natives and local whites upon whom scientists must depend if they are to live in the country, as to make work in the zones they contaminate difficult for years afterwards. The business of their adventures and discoveries is sickening.

I have sat squirming through a lecture in which the lecturer told how he barely escaped with his life after desperate adventures among the Jivaro Indians of Peru, while (a) he showed excellently taken moving pictures of the said adventures, (b) I had recently finished cataloguing a very nice collection of their material brought us by a man who happened, quite casually, to pass through their territory, and (c) three of my friends, boys in their

<sup>1</sup> These titles are not mere parodies; they are entirely possible. There are faint evidences that the primitive Mayas may once have had a numeral system other than their present one; indications of it in the inscriptions of Uuxactún would be startling news. Doctor Shapiro has developed a formula for approximating . . .



early twenties, were just back from spending their summer vacation among those friendly, kindly warriors.

I have read a thrilling account of an "explorer's" hardships in fighting his way upriver in the jungle, the threat of disease, battles with lianas and thorny bushes, alligators, lions and jaguars on the banks, deadly snakes in the underbrush, and hostile natives peering menacingly from behind the trees. He embarked upon this wild adventure in order to find a lost city of which he had heard a rumour. The fact was that he heard his rumour from an archaeologist who had dug there and published on it twenty years earlier, maps of the city were already available and specimens from it were on exhibition at Harvard. It lies within one day's travel of the capital of British Honduras, the upriver trip takes four hours in a motorboat, and the few inhabitants of that section are peaceful Negroes who are proud of being British subjects.

The public, innocently, laps up the stuff, and so if one mentions work in the field one meets an expectation which requires that he lie like Munchausen or take a back seat. The men whom I honour myself by calling my colleagues go out alone or in pairs, sometimes in larger groups, not because "there is a blank space on the map which must be filled in" or because "the little we could learn about the Poopidoopi River and its dark inhabitants presented an irresistible challenge and a mystery," but because the logic of their research calls for investigations in a given place, which may be five miles from a resort hotel or five hundred from the nearest human being. Year after year they go out, usually on a shoestring (I have been handed thirteen hundred dollars on which to buy all equipment, get myself from New York to Guatemala, live six months, and return), and they come back with *data*. They suffer from chronic tropical diseases; they occasionally encounter something vaguely resembling a romance; now and then they prevent "a brush with the natives" from arising by mother wit, tact, and a round of drinks; they carry out careful, exact work while malaria racks them; they suffer from hells of loneliness, and they experience peace and unflawed beauty.

These men by training express themselves in factual, "extensional" terms, which doesn't make for good adventure stories. They understandingly lean over backwards to avoid sounding even remotely like the frauds, the "explorers." And then, what they have seen and done lacks validity to them if it cannot be told in relation to the purpose and dominant emotion which sent them there. McGarnigle went among the independent Indians of Icaiché because he heard of a skull kept in one of their temples which, from a crude description, seemed to have certain important characteristics. All his risks and his manoeuvrings with those tough, explosive Indians centred around the problem of gaining access to that skull. When he tries to tell an attractive girl about his experiences he not only understates, but can't keep from stressing the significance of a skull with a healed, clover-leaf trepan. The girl gladly leaves him for the nearest broker.

The man is isolated all the way round. The snuffy fellow who gives a

couple of unlikely courses in the Winter Semester leaves every midyears to spend the next six months in a fabulous wilderness where he is intensely happy. There he is a person of eminence and authority among wild, hardy people; he is a great man, well proven. He knows intimately a world so unlike ours that it seems almost as if he had left this planet when he enters it. There and at home he exercises his mental faculties triumphantly on matters which he knows are important. But he can't make any of this known to anyone outside his own guild. It is small wonder, then, that he develops a special attitude towards people in general and seems somewhat peculiar. In the face of the evidence, the remarkable thing is that I have found most of my colleagues in my own, small field to be delightful companions, gentlemen, and two-fisted drinkers.

It is too bad both for the scientists and the public that they are so cut off from each other. The world needs now, not the mere knowledges of science, but the way of thought and the discipline. It is the essence of what Hitler has set out to destroy; against it he has waged total war within his own domain. It is more than skepticism, the weighing of evidence, more even than the love of truth. It is the devotion of oneself to an end which is far more important than the individual, the certainty that that end is absolutely good, not only for oneself but for all mankind, and the character to set personal advantage, comfort, and glory aside in the devoted effort to make even a little progress towards that end.

#### FOUR YEARS IN A SHED

(*From Madame Curie*)

*Eve Curie* (1937)

A MAN chosen at random from a crowd to read an account of the discovery of radium would not have doubted for one moment that radium existed: beings whose critical sense has not been sharpened and simultaneously deformed by specialized culture keep their imaginations fresh. They are ready to accept an unexpected fact, however extraordinary it may appear, and to wonder at it.

The physicist colleagues of the Curies received the news in slightly different fashion. The special properties of polonium and radium upset fundamental theories in which scientists had believed for centuries. How was one to explain the spontaneous radiation of the radioactive bodies? The discovery upset a world of acquired knowledge and contradicted the most firmly established ideas in the composition of matter. Thus the physicist kept on the reserve. He was violently interested in Pierre and Marie's work, he could perceive its infinite developments, but before being convinced he awaited the acquisition of decisive results.

The attitude of the chemist was even more downright. By definition, a chemist only believes in the existence of a new substance when he has seen the substance, touched it, weighed and examined it, confronted it with acids, bottled it, and when he has determined its "atomic weight."

Now, up to the present, nobody had "seen" radium. Nobody knew the atomic weight of radium. And the chemists, faithful to their principles, concluded: "No atomic weight, no radium. Show us some radium and we will believe you."

To show polonium and radium to the incredulous, to prove to the world the existence of their "children," and to complete their own conviction, M. and Mme. Curie were now to labor for four years.

The aim was to obtain pure radium and polonium. In the most strongly radioactive products the scientists had prepared, these substances figured only in imperceptible traces. Pierre and Marie already knew the method by which they could hope to isolate the new metals, but the separation could not be made except by treating very large quantities of crude material.

Here arose three agonizing questions:

How were they to get a sufficient quantity of ore? What premises could they use to effect their treatment? What money was there to pay the inevitable cost of the work?

Pitchblende, in which polonium and radium were hidden, was a costly ore, treated at the St. Joachimsthal mines in Bohemia for the extraction of uranium salts used in the manufacture of glass. Tons of pitchblende would cost a great deal: a great deal too much for the Curie household.

Ingenuity was to make up for wealth. According to the expectation of the two scientists, the extraction of uranium should leave, intact in the ore, such traces of polonium and radium as the ore contains. There was no reason why these traces should not be found in the residue. And, whereas crude pitchblende was costly, its residue after treatment had very slight value. By asking an Austrian colleague for a recommendation to the directors of the mine at St. Joachimsthal would it not be possible to obtain a considerable quantity of such residue for a reasonable price?

It was simple enough: but somebody had to think of it.

It was necessary, of course, to buy this crude material and pay for its transportation to Paris. Pierre and Marie appropriated the required sum from their very slight savings. They were not so foolish as to ask for official credits. . . . If two physicists on the scent of an immense discovery had asked the University of Paris or the French government for a grant to buy pitchblende residue, they would have been laughed at. In any case their letter would have been lost in the files of some office, and they would have had to wait months for a reply, probably unfavorable in the end. Out of the traditions and principles of the French Revolution, which had created the metric system, founded the Normal School, and encouraged science in many circumstances, the State seemed to have retained, after more than a century, only the deplor-

able words pronounced by Fouquier-Tinville at the trial in which Lavoisier was condemned to the guillotine: "The Republic has no need for scientists."

But at least could there not be found, in the numerous buildings attached to the Sorbonne, some kind of suitable workroom to lend to the Curie couple? Apparently not. After vain attempts, Pierre and Marie staggered back to their point of departure, which is to say to the School of Physics where Pierre taught, to the little room where Marie had done her first experiments. The room gave on a courtyard, and on the other side of the yard there was a wooden shack, an abandoned shed, with a skylight roof in such bad condition that it admitted the rain. The Faculty of Medicine had formerly used the place as a dissecting room, but for a long time now it had not even been considered fit to house the cadavers. No floor; an uncertain layer of bitumen covered the earth. It was furnished with some worn kitchen tables, a blackboard which had landed there for no known reason, and an old cast-iron stove with a rusty pipe.

A workman would not willingly have worked in such a place; Marie and Pierre, nevertheless, resigned themselves to it. The shed had one advantage: it was so untempting, so miserable, that nobody thought of refusing them the use of it. Schutzenberger, the director of the school, had always been very kind to Pierre Curie and no doubt regretted that he had nothing better to offer. However that may be, he offered nothing else; and the couple, very pleased at not being put out into the street with their material, thanked him, saying that "this would do" and that they would "make the best of it."

As they were taking possession of the shed, a reply arrived from Austria. Good news! By extraordinary luck, the residue of recent extractions of uranium had not been scattered. The useless material had been piled up in a no-man's-land planted with pine trees, near the mine of St. Joachimsthal. Thanks to the intercession of Professor Suess and the Academy of Science of Vienna, the Austrian government, which was the proprietor of the State factory there, decided to present a ton of residue to the two French lunatics who thought they needed it. If, later on, they wished to be sent a greater quantity of the material, they could obtain it at the mine on the best terms. For the moment the Curies had to pay only the transportation charges on a ton of ore.

One morning a heavy wagon, like those which deliver coal, drew up in the Rue Lhomond before the School of Physics. Pierre and Marie were notified. They hurried bareheaded into the street in their laboratory gowns. Pierre, who was never agitated, kept his calm; but the more exuberant Marie could not contain her joy at the sight of the sacks that were being unloaded. It was pitchblende, *her* pitchblende, for which she had received a notice some days before from the freight station. Full of curiosity and impatience, she wanted to open one of the sacks and contemplate her treasure without further waiting. She cut the strings, undid the coarse sackcloth and plunged

her two hands into the dull brown ore, still mixed with pine needles from Bohemia.

There was where radium was hidden. It was from there that Marie must extract it, even if she had to treat a mountain of this inert stuff like dust on the road.

Marya Sklodovska had lived through the most intoxicating moments of her student life in a garret; Marie Curie was to know wonderful joys again in a dilapidated shed. It was a strange sort of beginning over again, in which a sharp subtle happiness (which probably no woman before Marie had ever experienced) twice elected the most miserable setting.

The shed in the Rue Lhomond surpassed the most pessimistic expectations of discomfort. In summer, because of its skylights, it was as stifling as a hot-house. In winter one did not know whether to wish for rain or frost; if it rained, the water fell drop by drop, with a soft, nerve-racking noise, on the ground or on the work tables, in places which the physicists had to mark in order to avoid putting apparatus there. If it froze, one froze. There was no recourse. The stove, even when it was stoked white, was a complete disappointment. If one went near enough to touch it one received a little heat, but two steps away and one was back in the zone of ice.

It was almost better for Marie and Pierre to get used to the cruelty of the outside temperature, since their technical installation—hardly existent—possessed no chimneys to carry off noxious gases, and the greater part of their treatment had to be made in the open air, in the courtyard. When a shower came the physicists hastily moved their apparatus inside; to keep on working without being suffocated they set up draughts between the opened door and windows.

Marie probably did not boast to Dr. Vauthier of this very peculiar cure for attacks of tuberculosis.

We had no money, no laboratory and no help in the conduct of this important and difficult task (she was to write later). It was like creating something out of nothing, and if Casimir Dluski once called my student years "the heroic years of my sister-in-law's life," I may say without exaggeration that this period was, for my husband and myself, the heroic period of our common existence.

. . . And yet it was in this miserable old shed that the best and happiest years of our life were spent, entirely consecrated to work. I sometimes passed the whole day stirring a mass in ebullition, with an iron rod nearly as big as myself. In the evening I was broken with fatigue.

In such conditions M. and Mme. Curie worked for four years from 1898 to 1902.

During the first year they busied themselves with the chemical separation of radium and polonium and they studied the radiation of the products (more and more active) thus obtained. Before long they considered it more practical to separate their efforts. Pierre Curie tried to determine the prop-

erties of radium, and to know the new metal better. Marie continued those chemical treatments which would permit her to obtain salts of pure radium.

In this division of labor Marie had chosen the "man's job." She accomplished the toil of a day laborer. Inside the shed her husband was absorbed by delicate experiments. In the courtyard, dressed in her old dust-covered and acid-stained smock, her hair blown by the wind, surrounded by smoke which stung her eyes and throat, Marie was a sort of factory all by herself.

I came to treat as many as twenty kilograms of matter at a time (she writes), which had the effect of filling the shed with great jars full of precipitates and liquids. It was killing work to carry the receivers, to pour off the liquids and to stir, for hours at a stretch, the boiling matter in a smelting basin.

Radium showed no intention of allowing itself to be known by human creatures. Where were the days when Marie naïvely expected the radium content of pitchblende to be *one per cent*? The radiation of the new substance was so powerful that a tiny quantity of radium, disseminated through the ore, was the source of striking phenomena which could be easily observed and measured. The difficult, the impossible thing was to isolate this minute quantity, to separate it from the gangue in which it was so intimately mixed.

The days of work became months and years; Pierre and Marie were not discouraged. This material which resisted them, which defended its secrets, fascinated them. United by their tenderness, united by their intellectual passions, they had, in a wooden shack, the "anti-natural" existence for which they had both been made, she as well as he.

At this period we were entirely absorbed by the new realm that was, thanks to an un hoped-for discovery, opening before us (Marie was to write). In spite of the difficulties of our working conditions, we felt very happy. Our days were spent at the laboratory. In our poor shed there reigned a great tranquillity: sometimes, as we watched over some operation, we would walk up and down, talking about work in the present and in the future; when we were cold a cup of hot tea taken near the stove comforted us. We lived in our single preoccupation as if in a dream.

. . . We saw only very few persons at the laboratory; among the physicists and chemists there were a few who came from time to time, either to see our experiments or to ask for advice from Pierre Curie, whose competence in several branches of physics was well-known. Then took place some conversations before the blackboard—the sort of conversation one remembers well because it acts as a stimulant for scientific interest and the ardor for work without interrupting the course of reflection and without troubling that atmosphere of peace and meditation which is the true atmosphere of a laboratory.

Whenever Pierre and Marie, alone in this poor place, left their apparatus for a moment and quietly let their tongues run on, their talk about their beloved radium passed from the transcendent to the childish.

"I wonder what *It* will be like, what *It* will look like," Marie said one day with the feverish curiosity of a child who has been promised a toy. "Pierre, what form do you imagine *It* will take?"

"I don't know," the physicist answered gently. "I should like it to have a very beautiful color. . . ."

It is odd to observe that in Marie Curie's correspondence we find, upon this prodigious effort, none of the sensitive comments, decked out with imagery, which used to flash suddenly amid the familiarity of her letters. Was it because the years of exile had somewhat relaxed the young woman's intimacy with her people? Was she too pressed by work to find time?

The essential reason for this reserve is perhaps to be sought elsewhere. It was not by chance that Mme. Curie's letters ceased to be original at the exact moment when the story of her life became exceptional. As student, teacher or young wife, Marie could tell her story. . . . But now she was isolated by all that was secret and inexpressible in her scientific vocation. Among those she loved there was no longer anybody able to understand, to realize her worries and her difficult design. She could share her obsessions with only one person, Pierre Curie, companion. To him alone could she confide rare thoughts and dreams. Marie, from now on, was to present to all others, however near they might be to her heart, an almost commonplace picture of herself. She was to paint for them only the bourgeois side of her life. She was to find sometimes accents full of contained emotion to express her happiness as a woman. But of her work she was to speak only in laconic, inexpressive little phrases: news in three lines, without even attempting to suggest the wonders that work meant to her.

Here we feel an absolute determination not to illustrate the singular profession she had chosen by literature. Through subtle modesty, and also through horror of vain talk and everything superfluous, Marie concealed herself, dug herself in; or rather, she offered only one of her profiles. Shyness, boredom, or reason, whatever it may have been, the scientist of genius effaced and dissimulated herself behind "a woman like all others."

Marie to Bronya, 1899:

Our life is always the same. We work a lot but we sleep well, so our health does not suffer. The evenings are taken up by caring for the child. In the morning I dress her and give her her food, then I can generally go out at about nine. During the whole of this year we have not been either to the theater or a concert, and we have not paid one visit. For that matter, we feel very well. . . . I miss my family enormously, above all you, my dears, and Father. I often think of my isolation with grief. I cannot complain of anything else, for our health is not bad, the child is growing well, and I have the best husband one could dream of; I could never have imagined finding one like him. He is a true gift of heaven, and the more we live together the more we love each other.

Our work is progressing. I shall soon have a lecture to deliver on the sub-

ject. It should have been last Saturday but I was prevented from giving it, so it will no doubt be this Saturday, or else in a fortnight.

This work, which is so dryly mentioned in passing, was in fact progressing magnificently. In the course of the years 1899 and 1900 Pierre and Marie Curie published a report on the discovery of "induced radioactivity" due to radium, another on the effects of radioactivity, and another on the electric charge carried by the rays. And at last they drew up, for the Congress of Physics of 1900, a general report on the radioactive substances, which aroused immense interest among the scientists of Europe.

The development of the new science of radioactivity was rapid, overwhelming—the Curies needed fellow workers. Up to now they had had only the intermittent help of a laboratory assistant named Petit, an honest man who came to work for them outside his hours of service—working out of personal enthusiasm, almost in secret. But they now required technicians of the first order. Their discovery had important extensions in the domain of chemistry, which demanded attentive study. They wished to associate competent research workers with them.

Our work on radioactivity began in solitude (Marie was to write). But before the breadth of the task it became more and more evident that collaboration would be useful. Already in 1898 one of the laboratory chiefs of the school, G. Bemont, had given us some passing help. Toward 1900 Pierre Curie entered into relations with a young chemist, André Debierne, assistant in the laboratory of Professor Friedel, who esteemed him highly. André Debierne willingly accepted work on radioactivity. He undertook especially the research of a new radio element, the existence of which was suspected in the group of iron and rare clays. He discovered this element, named "actinium." Even though he worked in the physico-chemical laboratory at the Sorbonne directed by Jean Perrin, he frequently came to see us in our shed and soon became a very close friend to us, to Dr. Curie and later on to our children.

Thus, even before radium and polonium were isolated, a French scientist, André Debierne, had discovered a "brother," actinium.

At about the same period (Marie tells us), a young physicist, Georges Sagnac, engaged in studying X rays, came frequently to talk to Pierre Curie about the analogies that might exist between these rays, their secondary rays, and the radiation of radioactive bodies. Together they performed a work on the electric charge carried by these secondary rays.

Marie continued to treat, kilogram by kilogram, the tons of pitchblende residue which were sent her on several occasions from St. Joachimsthal. With her terrible patience, she was able to be, every day for four years, a physicist, a chemist, a specialized worker, an engineer and a laboring man all at once. Thanks to her brain and muscle, the old tables in the shed held more and



more concentrated products—products more and more rich in radium. Mme. Curie was approaching the end: she no longer stood in the courtyard, enveloped in bitter smoke, to watch the heavy basins of material in fusion. She was now at the stage of purification and of the “fractional crystallization” of strongly radioactive solutions. But the poverty of her haphazard equipment hindered her work more than ever. It was now that she needed a spotlessly clean workroom and apparatus perfectly protected against cold, heat and dirt. In this shed, open to every wind, iron and coal dust was afloat which, to Marie’s despair, mixed itself into the products purified with so much care. Her heart sometimes constricted before these little daily accidents, which took so much of her time and her strength.

Pierre was so tired of the interminable struggle that he would have been quite ready to abandon it. Of course, he did not dream of dropping the study of radium and of radioactivity. But he would willingly have renounced, for the time being, the special operation of preparing pure radium. The obstacles seemed insurmountable. Could they not resume this work later on, under better conditions? More attached to the meaning of natural phenomena than to their material reality, Pierre Curie was exasperated to see the paltry results to which Marie’s exhausting effort had led. He advised an armistice.

He counted without his wife’s character. Marie wanted to isolate radium and she would isolate it. She scorned fatigue and difficulties, and even the gaps in her own knowledge which complicated her task. After all, she was only a very young scientist: she still had not the certainty and great culture Pierre had acquired by twenty years’ work, and sometimes she stumbled across phenomena or methods of calculation of which she knew very little, and for which she had to make hasty studies.

So much the worse! With stubborn eyes under her great brow, she clung to her apparatus and her test tubes.

In 1902, forty-five months after the day on which the Curies announced the probable existence of radium, Marie finally carried off the victory in this war of attrition: she succeeded in preparing a decigram of pure radium, and made a first determination of the atomic weight of the new substance, which was 225.

The incredulous chemists—of whom there were still a few—could only bow before the facts, before the superhuman obstinacy of a woman.

Radium officially existed.

It was nine o’clock at night. Pierre and Marie Curie were in their little house at 108 Boulevard Kellermann, where they had been living since 1900. The house suited them well. From the boulevard, where three rows of trees half hid the fortifications, could be seen only a dull wall and a tiny door. But behind the one-story house, hidden from all eyes, there was a narrow provincial garden, rather pretty and very quiet. And from the “barrier” of Gentilly they could escape on their bicycles toward the suburbs and the woods. . . .

Old Dr. Curie, who lived with the couple, had retired to his room. Marie had bathed her child and put it to bed, and had stayed for a long time beside the cot. This was a rite. When Irene did not feel her mother near her at night she would call out for her incessantly, with that "Mé!" which was to be our substitute for "Mamma" always. And Marie, yielding to the implacability of the four-year-old baby, climbed the stairs, seated herself beside the child and stayed there in the darkness until the young voice gave way to light, regular breathing. Only then would she go down again to Pierre, who was growing impatient. In spite of his kindness, he was the most possessive and jealous of husbands. He was so used to the constant presence of his wife that her least eclipse kept him from thinking freely. If Marie delayed too long near her daughter, he received her on her return with a reproach so unjust as to be comic:

"You never think of anything but that child!"

Pierre walked slowly about the room. Marie sat down and made some stitches on the hem of Irene's new apron. One of her principles was never to buy ready-made clothes for the child: she thought them too fancy and impractical. In the days when Bronya was in Paris the two sisters cut out their children's dresses together, according to patterns of their own invention. These patterns still served for Marie.

But this evening she could not fix her attention. Nervous, she got up; then, suddenly:

"Suppose we go down there for a moment?"

There was a note of supplication in her voice—altogether superfluous, for Pierre, like herself, longed to go back to the shed they had left two hours before. Radium, fanciful as a living creature, endearing as a love, called them back to its dwelling, to the wretched laboratory.

The day's work had been hard, and it would have been more reasonable for the couple to rest. But Pierre and Marie were not always reasonable. As soon as they had put on their coats and told Dr. Curie of their flight, they were in the street. They went on foot, arm in arm, exchanging few words. After the crowded streets of this queer district, with its factory buildings, wastelands and poor tenements, they arrived in the Rue Lhomond and crossed the little courtyard. Pierre put the key in the lock. The door squeaked, as it had squeaked thousands of times, and admitted them to their realm, to their dream.

"Don't light the lamps!" Marie said in the darkness. Then she added with a little laugh:

"Do you remember the day when you said to me 'I should like radium to have a beautiful color'?"

The reality was more entrancing than the simple wish of long ago. Radium had something better than "a beautiful color": it was spontaneously luminous. And in the somber shed where, in the absence of cupboards, the precious par-

ticles in their tiny glass receivers were placed on tables or on shelves nailed to the wall, their phosphorescent bluish outlines gleamed, suspended in the night.

"Look. . . Look!" the young woman murmured.

She went forward cautiously, looked for and found a straw-bottomed chair. She sat down in the darkness and silence. Their two faces turned toward the pale glimmering, the mysterious sources of radiation, toward radium—their radium. Her body leaning forward, her head eager, Marie took up again the attitude which had been hers an hour earlier at the bedside of her sleeping child.

Her companion's hand lightly touched her hair.

She was to remember forever this evening of glowworms, this magic.

## THE CAMPERS AT KITTY HAWK

*From The Big Money*

*John Dos Passos (1933)*

ON DECEMBER SEVENTEENTH, nineteen hundred and three, Bishop Wright of the United Brethren, onetime editor of the *Religious Telescope*, received in his frame house on Hawthorn Street in Dayton, Ohio, a telegram from his boys, Wilbur and Orville, who'd gotten it into their heads to spend their vacations in a little camp out on the dunes of the North Carolina coast tinkering with a homemade glider they'd knocked together themselves. The telegram read:

SUCCESS FOUR FLIGHTS THURSDAY MORNING ALL AGAINST  
TWENTYONE MILE WIND STARTED FROM LEVEL WITH ENGINE-  
POWER ALONE AVERAGE SPEED THROUGH AIR THIRTYONE MILES  
LONGEST FIFTYSEVEN SECONDS INFORM PRESS HOME CHRISTMAS

The figures were a little wrong because the telegraph operator misread Orville's hasty penciled scrawl

but the fact remains

that a couple of young bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio

had designed, constructed and flown

for the first time ever a practical airplane.

*After running the motor a few minutes to heat it up, I released the wire that held the machine to the track and the machine started forward into the wind. Wilbur ran at the side of the machine, holding the wing to balance it on the track. Unlike the start on the fourteenth made in a calm, the machine facing a twenty-seven-mile wind started very slowly. . . . Wilbur was able to stay with it until it lifted from the track after a forty-foot run. One of the*

*lifesaving men snapped the camera for us, taking a picture just as it reached the end of the track and the machine had risen to a height of about two feet. . . . The course of the flight up and down was extremely erratic, partly due to the irregularities of the air, partly to lack of experience in handling this machine. A sudden dart when a little over a hundred and twenty feet from the point at which it rose in the air ended the flight. . . . This flight lasted only twelve seconds, but it was nevertheless the first in the history of the world in which a machine carrying a man had raised itself by its own power into the air in full flight, had sailed forward without reduction of speed and had finally landed at a point as high as that from which it started.*

A little later in the day the machine was caught in a gust of wind and turned over and smashed, almost killing the coastguardsman who tried to hold it down;

it was too bad

but the Wright brothers were too happy to care;

they'd proved that the damn thing flew.

*When these points had been definitely established we at once packed our goods and returned home knowing that the age of the flying machine had come at last.*

They were home for Christmas in Dayton, Ohio, where they'd been born in the seventies of a family who had been settled west of the Alleghenies since eighteen-fourteen, in Dayton, Ohio, where they'd been to grammar school and high school and joined their father's church and played baseball and hockey and worked out on the parallel bars and the flying swing and sold newspapers and built themselves a printingpress out of odds and ends from the junkheap and flown kites and tinkered with mechanical contraptions and gone around town as boys doing odd jobs to turn an honest penny.

The folks claimed it was the bishop's bringing home a helicopter, a fifty-cent mechanical toy made of two fans worked by elastic bands that was supposed to hover in the air, that had got his youngest boys hipped on the subject of flight

so that they stayed home instead of marrying the way the other boys did, and puttered all day about the house picking up a living with jobprinting, bicyclerepair work

sitting up late nights reading books on aerodynamics.

Still they were sincere churchmembers, their bicycle business was prosperous, a man could rely on their word. They were popular in Dayton.

In those days flyingmachines were the big laugh of all the crackerbarrel philosophers. Langley's and Chanute's unsuccessful experiments had been jeered down with an I-told-you-so that rang from coast to coast. The Wrights' big problem was to find a place secluded enough to carry on their

experiments without being the horselaugh of the countryside. Then they had no money to spend;

they were practical mechanics; when they needed anything they built it themselves.

They hit on Kitty Hawk,  
on the great dunes and sandy banks that stretch south towards Hatteras  
seaward of Albemarle Sound,  
a vast stretch of seabeach

empty except for a coastguard station, a few fishermen's shacks and the  
swarms of mosquitoes and the ticks and chiggers in the crabgrass behind  
the dunes

and overhead the gulls and swooping terns, in the evening fishhawks and  
cranes flapping across the saltmarshes, occasionally eagles  
that the Wright brothers followed soaring with their eyes  
as Leonardo watched them centuries before  
straining his sharp eyes to apprehend  
the laws of flight.

Four miles across the loose sand from the scattering of shacks, the Wright  
brothers built themselves a camp and a shed for their gliders. It was a long  
way to pack their groceries, their tools, anything they happened to need; in  
summer it was hot as blazes, the mosquitoes were hell;

but they were alone there

and they figured out that the loose sand was as soft as anything they could  
find to fall in.

There with a glider made of two planes and a tail in which they lay flat  
on their bellies and controlled the warp of the planes by shimmying their  
hips, taking off again and again all day from a big dune named Kill Devil Hill,  
they learned to fly.

Once they'd managed to hover for a few seconds  
and soar ever so slightly on a rising aircurrent  
they decided the time had come  
to put a motor in their biplane.

Back in the shop in Dayton, Ohio, they built an airtunnel, which is their  
first great contribution to the science of flying, and tried out model planes  
in it.

They couldn't interest any builders of gasoline engines so they had to  
build their own motor.

It worked; after that Christmas of nineteen three the Wright brothers  
weren't doing it for fun any more; they gave up their bicycle business, got  
the use of a big old cowpasture belonging to the local banker for practice  
flights, spent all the time when they weren't working on their machine in

promotion, worrying about patents, infringements, spies, trying to interest government officials, to make sense out of the smooth, involved, heart-breaking remarks of lawyers.

In two years they had a plane that would cover twentyfour miles at a stretch round and round the cowpasture.

People on the interurban car used to crane their necks out of the windows when they passed along the edge of the field, startled by the clattering pop pop of the old Wright motor and the sight of the white biplane, like a pair of ironingboards one on top of the other, chugging along a good fifty feet in the air. The cows soon got used to it.

As the flights got longer  
the Wright brothers got backers,  
engaged in lawsuits,  
lay in their beds at night sleepless with the whine of phantom millions,  
worse than the mosquitoes at Kitty Hawk.

In nineteen seven they went to Paris,  
allowed themselves to be toggged out in dress suits and silk hats,  
learned to tip waiters,  
talked with government experts, got used to gold braid and postponements and Vandyke beards and the outspread palms of politicians. For amusement  
they played diabolo in the Tuileries gardens.

They gave publicized flights at Fort Myers, where they had their first fatal crackup, St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin; at Pau they were all the rage, such an attraction that the hotelkeeper wouldn't charge them for their room. Alfonso of Spain shook hands with them and was photographed sitting in the machine,  
King Edward watched a flight,  
the Crown Prince insisted on being taken up,  
the rain of medals began.

They were congratulated by the Czar  
and the King of Italy and the amateurs of sport, and the society climbers and the papal titles,  
and decorated by a society for universal peace.

Aeronautics became the sport of the day.

The Wrights don't seem to have been very much impressed by the upholstery and the braid and the gold medals and the parades of plush horses, they remained practical mechanics

and insisted on doing all their own work themselves,  
even to filling the gasolinetank.

In nineteen eleven they were back on the dunes  
at Kitty Hawk with a new glider.

Orville stayed up in the air for nine and a half minutes, which remained  
a long time the record for motorless flight.

The same year Wilbur died of typhoidfever in Dayton.

In the rush of new names: Farman, Blériot, Curtiss, Ferber, Esnault-  
Peltrie, Delagrange;

in the sporting impact of bombs and the whine and rattle of shrapnel  
and the sudden stutter of machineguns after the motor's been shut off  
overhead,

and we flatten into the mud

and make ourselves small cowering in the corners of ruined walls,  
the Wright brothers passed out of the headlines

but not even headlines or the bitter smear of newsprint or the choke of  
smokescreen and gas or chatter of brokers on the stockmarket or barking  
of phantom millions or oratory of brasshats laying wreaths on new monu-  
ments

can blur the memory

of the chilly December day

two shivering bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio,

first felt their homemade contraption

whittled out of hickory sticks,

gummed together with Arnstein's bicycle cement,

stretched with muslin they'd sewn on their sister's sewingmachine in their  
own backyard on Hawthorn Street in Dayton, Ohio,

soar into the air

above the dunes and the wide beach

at Kitty Hawk.

## IN A COLLEGE LABORATORY

(From Arrowsmith)

Sinclair Lewis (1935)

### I

PROFESSOR MAX GOTTLIEB was about to assassinate a guinea pig with anthrax  
germs, and the bacteriology class were nervous.

They had studied the forms of bacteria, they had handled Petri dishes  
and platinum loops, they had proudly grown on potato slices the harmless.

red cultures of *Bacillus prodigiosus*, and they had come now to pathogenic germs and the inoculation of a living animal with swift disease. These two beady-eyed guinea pigs, chittering in a battery jar, would in two days be stiff and dead.

Martin had an excitement not free from anxiety. He laughed at it, he remembered with professional scorn how foolish were the lay visitors to the laboratory, who believed that sanguinary microbes would leap upon them from the mysterious centrifuge, from the benches, from the air itself. But he was conscious that in the cotton-plugged test-tube between the instrument-bath and the bichloride jar on the demonstrator's desk were millions of fatal anthrax germs.

The class looked respectful and did not stand too close. With the flair of technique, the sure rapidity which dignified the slightest movement of his hands, Dr. Gottlieb clipped the hair on the belly of a guinea pig held by the assistant. He soaped the belly with one flicker of a hand-brush, he shaved it and painted it with iodine.

(And all the while Max Gottlieb was recalling the eagerness of his first students, when he had just returned from working with Koch and Pasteur, when he was fresh from enormous beer seidels and Korpsbrüder and ferocious arguments. Passionate, beautiful days! *Die goldene Zeit!* His first classes in America, at Queen City College, had been awed by the sensational discoveries in bacteriology; they had crowded about him reverently; they had longed to know. Now the class was a mob. He looked at them—Fatty Pfaff in the front row, his face vacant as a doorknob; the co-eds, emotional and frightened; only Martin Arrowsmith and Angus Duer visibly intelligent. His memory fumbled for a pale blue twilight in Munich, a bridge and a waiting girl, and the sound of music.)

He dipped his hands in the bichloride solution and shook them—a quick shake, fingers down, like the fingers of a pianist above the keys. He took a hypodermic needle from the instrument-bath and lifted the test-tube. His voice flowed indolently, with German vowels and blurred w's:

"This, gentlemen, iss a twenty-four-hour culture of *Bacillus anthracis*. You will note, I am sure you will have noted already, that in the bottom of the tumbler there was cotton to keep the tube from being broken. I cannot advise breaking tubes of anthrax germs and afterwards getting the hands into the culture. You *might* merely get anthrax boils—"

The class shuddered.

Gottlieb twitched out the cotton plug with his little finger, so neatly that the medical student who had complained, "Bacteriology is junk; urinalysis and blood tests are all the lab stuff we need to know," now gave him something of the respect they had for a man who could do card tricks or remove an appendix in seven minutes. He agitated the mouth of the tube in the Bunsen burner, droning, "Every time you take the plug from a tube, flame the mouth of the tube. Make that a rule. It is a necessity of the technique."



and technique, gentlemen, is the beginning of all science. It iss also the least-known thing in science."

The class was impatient. Why didn't he get on with it, on to the entertainingly dreadful moment of inoculating the pig?

(And Max Gottlieb, glancing at the other guinea pig in the prison of its battery jar, meditated, "Wretched innocent! Why should I murder him, to teach Dummköpfe? It would be better to experiment on that fat young man.")

He thrust the syringe into the tube, he withdrew the piston dextrously with his index finger, and lectured:

"Take one-half c.c. of the culture. There are two kinds of M.D.'s—those to whom c.c. means cubic centimeter and those to whom it means compound cathartic. This second kind are more prosperous."

(But one cannot convey the quality of it: the thin drawl, the sardonic amiability, the hiss of the s's, the d's turned into blunt and challenging t's.)

The assistant held the guinea pig close; Gottlieb pinched up the skin of the belly and punctured it with a quick downthrust of the hypodermic needle. The pig gave a little jerk, a little squeak, and the co-eds shuddered. Gottlieb's wise fingers knew when the peritoneal wall was reached. He pushed home the plunger of the syringe. He said quietly, "This poor animal will now soon be dead as Moses." The class glanced at one another uneasily. "Some of you will think that it does not matter; some of you will think, like Bernard Shaw, that I am an executioner and the more monstrous because I am cool about it; and some of you will not think at all. This difference in philosophy iss what makes life interesting."

While the assistant tagged the pig with a tin disk in its ear and restored it to the battery jar, Gottlieb set down its weight in a notebook, with the time of inoculation and the age of the bacterial culture. These notes he reproduced on the blackboard, in his fastidious script, murmuring, "Gentlemen, the most important part of living is not the living but pondering upon it. And the most important part of experimentation is *quantitative* notes—in ink. I am told that a great many clever people feel they can keep notes in their heads. I have often observed with pleasure that such persons do not have heads in which to keep their notes. This iss very good, because thus the world never sees their results and science is not encumbered with them. I shall now inoculate the second guinea pig, and the class will be dismissed. Before the next lab hour I shall be glad if you will read Pater's 'Marius the Epicurean,' to derive from it the calmness which is the secret of laboratory skill."

## II

As they bustled down the hall, Angus Duer observed to a brother Digam, "Gottlieb is an old laboratory plug; he hasn't got any imagination; he sticks

here instead of getting out into the world and enjoying the fight. But he certainly is handy. Awfully good technique. He might have been a first-rate surgeon, and made fifty thousand dollars a year. As it is, I don't suppose he gets a cent over four thousand!"

Ira Hinkley walked alone, worrying. He was an extraordinarily kindly man, this huge and bumbling parson. He reverently accepted everything, no matter how contradictory to everything else, that his medical instructors told him, but this killing of animals—he hated it. By a connection not evident to him he remembered that the Sunday before, in the slummy chapel where he preached during his medical course, he had exalted the sacrifice of the martyrs and they had sung of the blood of the lamb, the fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, but this meditation he lost, and he lumbered toward Digamma Pi in a fog of pondering pity.

Clif Clawson, walking with Fatty Pfaff, shouted, "Gosh, ole pig certainly did jerk when Pa Gottlieb rammed that needle home!" and Fatty begged, "Don't! Please!"

But Martin Arrowsmith saw himself doing the same experiment, and as he remembered Gottlieb's unerring fingers, his hands curved in imitation.

### III

The guinea pigs grew drowsier and drowsier. In two days they rolled over, kicked convulsively, and died. Full of dramatic expectation, the class reassembled for the necropsy. On the demonstrator's table was a wooden tray, scarred from the tacks which for years had pinned down the corpses. The guinea pigs were in a glass jar, rigid, their hair ruffled. The class tried to remember how nibbling and alive they had been. The assistant stretched out one of them with thumb-tacks. Gottlieb swabbed its belly with a cotton wad soaked in lysol, slit in from belly to neck, and cauterized the heart with a red-hot spatula—the class quivered as they heard the searing of the flesh. Like a priest of diabolic mysteries, he drew out the blackened blood with a pipette. With the distended lungs, the spleen and kidneys and liver, the assistant made wavy smears on glass slides which were stained and given to the class for examination. The students who had learned to look through the microscope without having to close one eye were proud and professional, and all of them talked of the beauty of identifying the bacillus, as they twiddled the brass thumb-screws to the right focus and the cells rose from cloudiness to sharp distinctness on the slides before them. But they were uneasy, for Gottlieb remained with them that day, stalking behind them, saying nothing, watching them always, watching the disposal of the remains of the guinea pigs, and along the benches ran nervous rumors about a bygone student who had died from anthrax infection in the laboratory.

## IV

There was for Martin in these days a quality of satisfying delight; the zest of a fast hockey game, the serenity of the prairie, the bewilderment of great music, and a feeling of creation. He woke early and thought contentedly of the day; he hurried to his work, devout, unseeing.

The confusion of the bacteriological laboratory was ecstasy to him—the students in shirt-sleeves, filtering nutrient gelatine, their fingers gummed from the crinkly gelatine leaves; or heating media in an autoclave like a silver howitzer. The roaring Bunsen flames beneath the hot-air ovens, the steam from the Arnold sterilizers rolling to the rafters, clouding the windows, were to Martin lovely with activity, and to him the most radiant things in the world were rows of test-tubes filled with watery serum and plugged with cotton singed to a coffee brown, a fine platinum loop leaning in a shiny test-glass, a fantastic hedge of tall glass tubes mysteriously connecting jars, or a bottle rich with gentian violet stain.

He had begun, perhaps in youthful imitation of Gottlieb, to work by himself in the laboratory at night. . . . The long room was dark, thick dark, but for the gas-mantle behind his microscope. The cone of light cast a gloss on the bright brass tube, a sheen on his black hair, as he bent over the eyepiece. He was studying trypanosomes from a rat—an eight-branched rosette stained with polychrome methylene blue; a cluster of organisms delicate as a narcissus, with their purple nuclei, their light blue cells, and the thin lines of the flagella. He was excited and a little proud; he had stained the germs perfectly, and it is not easy to stain a rosette without breaking the petal shape. In the darkness, a step, the weary step of Max Gottlieb, and a hand on Martin's shoulder. Silently Martin raised his head, pushed the microscope toward him. Bending down, a cigarette stub in his mouth—the smoke would have stung the eyes of any human being—Gottlieb peered at the preparation.

He adjusted the gas light a quarter inch, and mused, "Splendid! You have craftsmanship. Oh, there is an art in science—for a few. You Americans, so many of you—all full with ideas, but you are impatient with the beautiful dullness of long labors. I see already—and I watch you in the lab before—perhaps you may try the trypanosomes of sleeping sickness. They are very, very interesting, and very, very ticklish to handle. It is quite a nice disease. In some villages in Africa, fifty per cent of the people have it, and it is invariably fatal. Yes, I think you might work on the bugs."

Which, to Martin, was getting his brigade in battle.

"I shall have," said Gottlieb, "a little sandwich in my room at midnight. If you should happen to work so late, I should be very pleased if you would come to have a bite."

Diffidently, Martin crossed the hall to Gottlieb's immaculate laboratory at midnight. On the bench were coffee and sandwiches, curiously small and excellent sandwiches, foreign to Martin's lunchroom taste.

Gottlieb talked till Clif had faded from existence and Angus Duer seemed but an absurd climber. He summoned forth London laboratories, dinners on frosty evenings in Stockholm, walks on the Pincio with sunset behind the dome of San Pietro, extreme danger and overpowering disgust from excreta-smearred garments in an epidemic at Marseilles. His reserve slipped from him and he talked of himself and of his family as though Martin were a contemporary.

The cousin who was a colonel in Uruguay and the cousin, a rabbi, who was tortured in a pogrom in Moscow. His sick wife—it might be cancer. The three children—the youngest girl, Miriam, she was a good musician, but the boy, the fourteen-year-old, he was a worry; he was a saucy, he would not study. Himself, he had worked for years on the synthesis of antibodies; he was at present in a blind alley, and at Mohalis there was no one who was interested, no one to stir him, but he was having an agreeable time massacring the opsonin theory, and that cheered him.

"No, I have done nothing except be unpleasant to people that claim too much, but I have dreams of real discoveries some day. And— No. Not five times in five years do I have students who understand craftsmanship and precision and maybe some big imagination in hypotheses. I t'ink perhaps you may have them. If I can help you— So!

"I do not t'ink you will be a good doctor. Good doctors are fine—often they are artists—but their trade, it is not for us lonely ones that work in labs. Once, I took an M.D. label. In Heidelberg that was—Herr Gott, back in 1875! I could not get much interested in bandaging legs and looking at tongues. I was a follower of Helmholtz—what a wild blithering young fellow! I tried to make researches into the physics of sound—I was bad, most unbelievable, but I learned that in this vale of tears there is nothing certain but the quantitative method. And I was a chemist—a fine stink-maker was I. And so into biology and much trouble. It has been good. I have found one or two things. And if sometimes I feel an exile, cold—I had to get out of Germany one time for refusing to sing *Die Wacht am Rhein* and trying to kill a cavalry captain—he was a stout fellow—I had to choke him—you see I am boasting, but I was a lively *Kerl* thirty years ago! Ah! So!

"There is but one trouble of a philosophical bacteriologist. Why should we destroy these amiable pathogenic germs? Are we too sure, when we regard these, oh, most unbeautiful young students attending Y. M. C. A.'s and singing dinkle-songs and wearing hats with initials burned into them—iss it worth while to protect them from the so elegantly functioning *Bacillus typhosus* with its lovely flagella? You know, once I asked Dean Silva would it not be better to let loose the pathogenic germs on the world, and so solve all economic questions. But he did not care for my met'od. Oh, well, he is older than I am; he also gives, I hear, some dinner parties with bishops and judges present, all in nice clothes. He would know more than a German Jew who loves Father Nietzsche and Father Schopenhauer (but, damn him, he

was teleological-minded!) and Father Koch and Father Pasteur and Brother Jacques Loeb and Brother Arrhenius. *Ja!* I talk foolishness. Let us go look at your slides and so good-night."

When he had left Gottlieb at his stupid brown little house, his face as reticent as though the midnight supper and all the rambling talk had never happened, Martin ran home, altogether drunk.

## THE DEBT

*Edith Wharton (1910)*

You remember—it's not so long ago—the talk there was about Dredge's "Arrival of the Fittest"? The talk has subsided, but the book, of course, remains; stands up, in fact, as the tallest thing of its kind since—well, I'd almost said since "The Origin of Species."

I'm not wrong, at any rate, in calling it the most important contribution yet made to the development of the Darwinian theory, or rather to the solution of the awkward problem about which that theory has had to make such a circuit. Dredge's hypothesis will be contested, may one day be disproved; but at least it has swept out of the way all previous conjectures including, of course, Lanfear's great attempt; and for our generation of scientific investigators it will serve as the first safe bridge across a murderous black whirlpool.

It's all very interesting—there are few things more stirring to the imagination than that projection of the new hypothesis, light as a cobweb and strong as steel across the intellectual abyss; but, for an idle observer of human motives, the other, the personal side of Dredge's case is even more interesting and arresting.

Personal side? You didn't know there was one? Pictured him simply as a thinking machine, a highly specialized instrument of precision, the result of a long series of "adaptations" as his own jargon would put it? Well, I don't wonder—if you've met him. He does give the impression of being something out of his own laboratory: a delicate instrument that reveals wonders to the initiated, but is useless in an ordinary hand.

In his youth it was just the other way. I knew him twenty years ago, as an awkward lad whom young Archie Lanfear had picked up at college and brought home for a visit. I happened to be staying at the Lanfears' when the boys arrived, and I shall never forget Dredge's first appearance on the scene. You know the Lanfears always lived very simply. That summer they had gone to Buzzards Bay in order that Professor Lanfear should be near the Biological Station at Woods Hole, and they were picnicking in a kind of sketchy bungalow without any attempt at luxury. But Galen Dredge couldn't have been more awe-struck if he'd been suddenly plunged into a Fifth

Avenue ballroom. He nearly knocked his head against the low doorway, and in dodging this peril trod heavily on Mabel Lanfear's foot, and became hopelessly entangled in her mother's draperies—though how he managed it I never knew, for Mrs. Lanfear's dowdy muslins ran to no excess of train.

When the Professor himself came in it was ten times worse, and I saw then that Dredge's emotion was a tribute to the great man's presence. That made the boy interesting, and I began to watch. Archie, always enthusiastic but vague, had said, "Oh, he's a tremendous chap—you'll see—" but I hadn't expected to see quite so early. Lanfear's vision, of course, was sharper than mine; and the next morning he had carried Dredge off to the Biological Station. That was the way it began.

Dredge is the son of a Baptist minister. He comes from East Lethe, New York State, and was working his way through college—waiting at White Mountains hotels in summer when Archie Lanfear ran across him. There were eight children in the family, and the mother was an invalid. Dredge never had a penny from his father after he was fourteen; but his mother wanted him to be a scholar, and "kept at him," as he put it, in the hope of his going back to "teach school" at East Lethe. He developed slowly, as the scientific mind generally does, and was still adrift about himself and his tendencies when Archie took him down to Buzzards Bay. But he had read Lanfear's "Utility and Variation" and had always been a patient and curious observer of nature. And his first meeting with Lanfear explained him to himself. It didn't, however, enable him to explain himself to others, and for a long time he remained, to all but Lanfear, an object of incredulity and conjecture.

"Why my husband wants him about—" poor Mrs. Lanfear, the kindest of women, privately lamented to her friends; for Dredge, at that time—they kept him all summer at the bungalow—had one of the most encumbering personalities you can imagine. He was as inexpressive as he is today, and yet oddly obtrusive: one of those uncomfortable presences whose silence is an interruption.

The poor Lanfears almost died of him that summer, and the pity of it was that he never suspected it, but continued to lavish on them a floundering devotion as inconvenient as the endearments of a dripping dog. He was full of all sorts of raw enthusiasm, which he forced on anyone who would listen when his first shyness had worn off. You can't see him spouting sentimental poetry, can you? Yet I've known him to petrify a whole group of Mrs. Lanfear's callers by suddenly discharging on them, in the strident drawl of his State, "Barbara Frietchie" or "The Queen of the May." His taste in literature was uniformly bad, but very definite, and far more dogmatic than his views on biological questions. In his scientific judgments he showed, even then, a temperance remarkable in one so young; but in literature he was a furious propagandist, aggressive, disputatious, and extremely sensitive to adverse opinion.

Lanfear, of course, had been struck from the first by his gift of observation, and by the fact that his eagerness to learn was offset by his reluctance to conclude. I remember Lanfear's telling me that he had never known a lad of Dredge's age who gave such promise of uniting an aptitude for general ideas with the plodding patience of the observer. Of course, when Lanfear talked like that of a young biologist his fate was sealed. There could be no question of Dredge's going back to "teach school" at East Lethe. He must take a course in biology at Columbia, spend vacations at the Woods Hole laboratory, and then, if possible, go to Germany for a year or two.

All this meant his virtual adoption by the Lanfears. Most of Lanfear's fortune went in helping young students to a start, and he devoted a liberal subsidy to Dredge.

"Dredge will be my biggest dividend—you'll see!" he used to say, in the chrysalis days when poor Galen was known to the world of science only as a slouching presence in Mrs. Lanfear's drawing-room. And Dredge, it must be said, took his obligations simply, with the dignity and quiet consciousness of his own worth, which in such cases saves the beneficiary from abjectness. He seemed to trust in himself as fully as Lanfear trusted him.

The comic part of it was that his only idea of making what is known as "a return" was to devote himself to the Professor's family. When I hear pretty women lamenting that they can't coax Professor Dredge out of his laboratory I remember Mabel Lanfear's cry to me: "If Galen would only keep away!" When Mabel fell on the ice and broke her leg, Galen walked seven miles in a blizzard to get a surgeon; but if he did her this service one day in the year, he bored her by being in the way for the other three hundred and sixty-four. One would have imagined at that time that he thought his perpetual presence the greatest gift he could bestow; for, except on the occasion of his fetching the surgeon, I don't remember his taking any other way of expressing his gratitude.

In love with Mabel? Not a bit of it! But the queer thing was that he *did* have a passion in those days—a blind hopeless passion for Mrs. Lanfear! Yes, I know what I'm saying. I mean Mrs. Lanfear, the Professor's wife, poor Mrs. Lanfear, with her tight hair and her loose shape, her blameless brow and earnest eye-glasses, and her perpetual air of mild misapprehension. I can see Dredge cowering, long and many-jointed, in a small drawing-room chair, one square-toed shoe coiled round an exposed ankle, his knees clasped in a knot of knuckles, and his spectacles perpetually seeking Mrs. Lanfear's eye-glasses. I never knew if the poor lady was aware of the sentiment she inspired, but her children observed it, and it provoked them to irreverent mirth. Galen was the predestined butt of Mabel and Archie; and secure in their mother's obtuseness, and in her worshipper's timidity, they allowed themselves a latitude of banter that sometimes made their audience shiver. Dredge meanwhile was going on obstinately with his work. Now and then he had fits of idleness, when he lapsed into a state of sulky inertia from which

even Lanfear's remonstrances could not rouse him. Once, just before an examination, he suddenly went off to the Maine woods for two weeks, came back, and failed to pass. I don't know if his benefactor ever lost hope; but at times his confidence must have been sorely strained. The queer part of it was that when Dredge emerged from these eclipses he seemed keener and more active than ever. His slowly growing intelligence probably needed its periodical pauses of assimilation; and Lanfear was wonderfully patient.

At last Dredge finished his course and went to Germany; and when he came back he was a new man—was, in fact, the Dredge we all know. He seemed to have shed his encumbering personality, and have come to life as a disembodied intelligence. His fidelity to the Lanfears was unchanged; but he showed it negatively, by his discretions and abstentions. I have an idea that Mabel was less disposed to laugh at him, might even have been induced to softer sentiments; but I doubt if Dredge even noticed the change. As for his ex-goddess, he seemed to regard her as a motherly household divinity, the guardian genius of the darning needle; but on Professor Lanfear he looked with a deepening reverence. If the rest of the family had diminished in his eyes, its head had grown even greater.

## II

From that day Dredge's progress continued steadily. If not always perceptible to the untrained eye, in Lanfear's sight it never flagged, and the great man began to associate Dredge with his work, and to lean on him more and more. Lanfear's health was already failing, and in my confidential talks with him I saw how he counted on Dredge to continue and develop his teachings. If he did not describe the young man as his predestined Huxley, it was because any such comparison between himself and his great predecessors would have been distasteful to him; but he evidently felt that it would be Dredge's part to reveal him to posterity. And the young man seemed at that time to take the same view. When he was not busy about Lanfear's work he was recording their conversations with the diligence of a biographer and the accuracy of a naturalist. Any attempt to question Lanfear's theories or to minimize his achievement, roused in his disciple the only flashes of wrath I have ever seen in him. In defending his master he became also as intemperate as in the early period of his literary passions.

Such filial devotion must have been all the more precious to Lanfear because, about that time, it became evident that Archie would never carry on his father's work. He had begun brilliantly, you may remember, by a little paper on *Limulus Polyphemus* that attracted a good deal of notice when it appeared; but gradually his zoological ardour yielded to a passion for the violin, which was followed by a plunge into physics. At present, after a side-glance at the drama, I understand he's devoting what is left of his father's money to archeological explorations in Asia Minor.



"Archie's got a delightful little mind," Lanfear used to say to me, rather wistfully, "but it's just a highly polished surface held up to the show as it passes. Dredge's mind takes in only a bit at a time, but the bit stays, and other bits are joined to it, in a hard mosaic of fact, of which imagination weaves the pattern. I saw just how it would be years ago, when my boy used to take my meaning in a flash, and answer me with clever objections, while Galen disappeared into one of his fathomless silences, and then came to the surface like a dripping retriever, a long way beyond Archie's objections, and with an answer to them in his mouth."

It was about this time that the crowning satisfaction of Lanfear's career came to him; I mean, of course, John Weyman's gift to Columbia of the Lanfear Laboratory, and the founding, in connection with it, of a chair of Experimental Evolution. Weyman had always taken an interest in Lanfear's work, but no one had supposed that his interest would express itself so magnificently. The honour came to Lanfear at a time when he was fighting an accumulation of troubles: failing health, the money difficulties resulting from his irrepressible generosity, his disappointment about Archie's career, and perhaps also the persistent attacks of the new school of German zoologists.

"If I hadn't taken Galen I should feel the game was up," he said to me once, in a fit of half-real, half-mocking despondency. "But he'll do what I haven't time to do myself, and what my boy can't do for me."

That meant that he would answer the critics, and triumphantly reaffirm Lanfear's theory, which had been rudely shaken, but not dislodged.

"A scientific hypothesis lasts till there's something else to put in its place. People who want to get across a river will use the old bridge till the new one's built. And I don't see anyone who's particularly anxious, in this case, to take a contract for the new one," Lanfear ended; and I remember answering with a laugh: "Not while Horatius Dredge holds the other."

It was generally known that Lanfear had not long to live, and the Laboratory was hardly opened before the question of his successor in the chair of Experimental Evolution began to be a matter of public discussion. It was conceded that whoever followed him ought to be a man of achieved reputation, someone carrying, as the French say, a considerable "baggage." At that same time, even Lanfear's critics felt that he should be succeeded by a man who held his views and would continue his teaching. This was not in itself a difficulty, for German criticism had so far been mainly negative, and there were plenty of good men who, while they questioned the permanent validity of Lanfear's conclusions, were yet ready to accept them for their provisional usefulness. And then there was the added inducement of the Laboratory! The Columbia Professor of Experimental Evolution has at his disposal the most complete instrument of biological research that modern ingenuity has yet produced; and it's not only in theology or politics *que Paris vaut bien une messe!* There was no trouble about finding a candidate;

but the whole thing turned on Lanfear's decision, since it was tacitly understood that, by Weyman's wish, he was to select his successor. And what a cry there was when he selected Galen Dredge!

Not in the scientific world, though. The specialists were beginning to know about Dredge. His remarkable paper on Sexual Dimorphism had been translated into several languages, and a furious polemic had broken out over it. When a young fellow can get the big men fighting over him his future is pretty well assured. But Dredge was only thirty-four, and some people seemed to feel that there was a kind of deflected nepotism in Lanfear's choice.

"If he could choose Dredge he might as well have chosen his own son," I've heard it said; and the irony was that Archie—will you believe it?—actually thought so himself! But Lanfear had Weyman behind him, and when the end came the Faculty at once appointed Galen Dredge to the chair of Experimental Evolution.

For the first two years things went quietly, along accustomed lines. Dredge simply continued the course which Lanfear's death had interrupted. He lectured well even then, with a persuasive simplicity surprising in the inarticulate creature one knew him for. But haven't you noticed that certain personalities reveal themselves only in the more impersonal relations of life? It's as if they woke only to collective contacts, and the single consciousness were an unmeaning fragment to them.

If there was anything to criticize in that first part of the course, it was the avoidance of general ideas, of those brilliant rockets of conjecture that Lanfear's students were used to seeing him fling across the darkness. I remember once saying this to Archie, who, having forgotten his absurd disappointment, had returned to his old allegiance to Dredge.

"Oh, that's Galen all over. He doesn't want to jump into the ring until he has a big swishing knock-down argument in his fist. He'll wait twenty years if he has to. That's his strength; he's never afraid to wait."

I thought this shrewd of Archie, as well as generous; and I saw the wisdom of Dredge's course. As Lanfear himself had said, his theory was safe enough till somebody found a more attractive one; and before that day Dredge would probably have accumulated sufficient proof to crystallise the fluid hypothesis.

### III

The third winter I was off collecting in Central America, and didn't get back till Dredge's course had been going for a couple of months. The very day I turned up in town Archie Lanfear descended on me with a summons from his mother. I was wanted at once at a family council.

I found the Lanfear ladies in a state of explosive distress, which Archie's own indignation hardly made more intelligible. But gradually I put together their fragmentary charges, and learned that Dredge's lectures were turning into an organised assault on his master's doctrine.

"It amounts to just this," Archie said, controlling his women with the masterful gesture of the weak man. "Galen has simply turned around and betrayed my father."

"Just for a handful of silver he left us," Mabel sobbed in parenthesis, while Mrs. Lanfear tearfully cited Hamlet.

Archie silenced them again. "The ugly part of it is that he must have had this up his sleeve for years. He must have known when he was asked to succeed my father what use he meant to make of his opportunity. What he's doing isn't the result of a hasty conclusion; it means years of work and preparation."

Archie broke off to explain himself. He had returned from Europe the week before, and had learned on arriving that Dredge's lectures were stirring the world of science as nothing had stirred it since Lanfear's "Utility and Variation." And the incredible affront was that they owed their success to the fact of being an attempted refutation of Lanfear's great work.

I own that I was staggered: the case looked ugly, as Archie said. And there was a veil of reticence, of secrecy, about Dredge, that always kept his conduct in a half-light of uncertainty. Of some men one would have said offhand: "It's impossible!" But one couldn't affirm it of him.

Archie hadn't seen him as yet; and Mrs. Lanfear had sent for me because she wished me to be present at the interview between the two men. The Lanfear ladies had a touching belief in Archie's violence; they thought of him as terrible as a natural force. My own idea was that if there were any broken bones they wouldn't be Dredge's; but I was too curious as to the outcome not to be glad to offer my services as moderator.

First, however, I wanted to hear one of the lectures; and I went the next afternoon. The hall was jammed, and I saw, as soon as Dredge appeared, what increased security and ease the sympathy of his audience had given him. He had been clear the year before; now he was also eloquent. The lecture was a remarkable effort; you'll find the gist of it in Chapter VII of "The Arrival of the Fittest." Archie sat at my side in a white rage; he was too intelligent not to measure the extent of the disaster. And I was almost as indignant as he when we went to see Dredge the next day.

I saw at a glance that the latter suspected nothing; and it was characteristic of him that he began by questioning me about my finds, and only afterward turned to reproach Archie for having been back a week without letting him know.

"You know I'm up to my neck in this job. Why in the world didn't you hunt me up before this?"

The question was exasperating, and I could understand Archie's stammer of wrath.

"Hunt you up? Hunt you up? What the deuce are you made of, to ask me such a question instead of wondering why I'm here now?"

Dredge bent his slow calm scrutiny on his friend's agitated face; then he turned to me.

"What's the matter?" he said simply.

"The matter?" shrieked Archie, his fist hovering excitedly above the desk by which he stood; but Dredge, with unwonted quickness, caught the fist as it descended.

"Careful—I've got a Kallima in that jar there." He pushed a chair forward and added quietly: "Sit down."

Archie, ignoring the gesture, towered pale and avenging in his place; and Dredge, after a moment, took the chair himself.

"The matter?" Archie reiterated. "Are you so lost to all sense of decency and honour that you can put that question in good faith? Don't you really *know* what's the matter?"

Dredge smiled slowly. "There are so few things one really *knows*."

"Oh, damn your scientific hair-splitting! Don't you know you're insulting my father's memory?"

Dredge thoughtfully turned his spectacles from one of us to the other.

"Oh, that's it, is it? Then you'd better sit down. If you don't see it at once it'll take some time to make you."

Archie burst into an ironic laugh.

"I rather think it will!" he retorted.

"Sit down, Archie," I said, setting the example; and he obeyed, with a gesture that made his consent a protest.

Dredge seemed to notice nothing beyond the fact that his visitors were seated. He reached for his pipe, and filled it with the care which the habit of delicate manipulations gave to all the motions of his long, knotty hands.

"It's about the lectures?" he said.

Archie's answer was a deep and scornful breath.

"You've only been back a week, so you've only heard one, I suppose?"

"It was not necessary to hear even that one. You must know the talk they're making. If notoriety is what you're after—"

"Well, I'm not sorry to make a noise," said Dredge, putting a match to his pipe.

Archie bounded in his chair. "There's no easier way of doing it than to attack a man who can't answer you!"

Dredge raised a sobering hand. "Hold on. Perhaps you and I don't mean the same thing. Tell me first what's in your mind."

The question steadied Archie, who turned on Dredge a countenance really eloquent with filial indignation.

"It's an odd question for you to ask; it makes me wonder what's in yours. Not much thought of my father, at any rate, or you couldn't stand in his place and use the chance he's given you to push yourself at his expense."

Dredge received this in silence, puffing slowly at his pipe.

"Is that the way it strikes you?" he asked at length.

"God! It's the way it would strike most men."

He turned to me. "You too?"

"I can see how Archie feels," I said.

"That I am attacking his father's memory to glorify myself?"

"Well, not precisely: I think what he really feels is that, if your convictions didn't permit you to continue his father's teaching, you might perhaps have done better to sever your connection with the Lanfear lectureship."

"Then you and he regard the Lanfear lectureship as having been founded to perpetuate a dogma, not to try and get at the truth?"

"Certainly not," Archie broke in. "But there's a question of taste, of delicacy, involved in the case that can't be decided on abstract principles. We know as well as you that my father meant the laboratory and the lectureship to serve the ends of science, at whatever cost to his own special convictions; what we feel—and you don't seem to—is that you're the last man to put them to that particular use; and I don't want to remind you why."

A slight redness rose through Dredge's sallow skin. "You needn't," he said. "It's because he pulled me out of my hole, woke me up, made me, shoved me off from the shore. Because he saved me ten or twenty years of muddled effort, and put me where I am at an age when my best working years are still ahead of me. Everyone knows that's what your father did for me, but I'm the only person who knows the time and trouble it took."

It was well said, and I glanced quickly at Archie, who was never closed to generous emotions.

"Well, then—?" he said, flushing also.

"Well, then," Dredge continued, his voice deepening and losing its nasal edge, "I had to pay him back, didn't I?"

The sudden drop flung Archie back on his prepared attitude of irony. "It would be the natural inference—with most men."

"Just so. And I'm not so very different. I knew your father wanted a successor—someone who'd try and tie up the loose ends. And I took the lectureship with that object."

"And you're using it to tear the whole fabric to pieces!"

Dredge paused to relight his pipe. "Looks that way," he conceded. "This year anyhow."

"*This year—?*" Archie echoed.

"Yes. When I took the job I saw it just as your father left it. Or rather, I didn't see any other way of going on with it. The change came gradually, as I worked."

"Gradually? So that you had time to look round you, to know where you were, to see that you were fatally committed to undoing the work he had done?"

"Oh, yes—I had time," Dredge conceded.

"And yet you kept the chair and went on with the course?"

Dredge refilled his pipe, and then turned in his seat so that he looked squarely at Archie.

"What would your father have done in my place?" he asked.

"In your place—?"

"Yes, supposing he'd found out the things I've found out in the last year

or two. You'll see what they are, and how much they count, if you'll run over the report of the lectures. If your father'd been alive he might have come across the same facts just as easily."

There was a silence which Archie at last broke by saying: "But he didn't, and you did. There's the difference."

"The difference? What difference? Would your father have suppressed the facts if he'd found them? It's *you* who insult his memory by implying it! And if I'd brought them to him, would he have used his hold over me to get me to suppress them?"

"Certainly not. But can't you see it's his death that makes the difference? He's not here to defend his case."

Dredge laughed, but not unkindly. "My dear Archie, your father wasn't one of the kind who bother to defend their case. Men like him are the masters, not the servants, of their theories. They respect an idea only as long as it's of use to them; when its usefulness ends they chuck it out. And that's what your father would have done."

Archie reddened. "Don't you assume a good deal in taking it for granted that he would have had to do so in this particular case?"

Dredge reflected. "Yes, I was going too far. Each of us can only answer for himself. But to my mind your father's theory is refuted."

"And you don't hesitate to be the man to do it?"

"Should I have been of any use if I had? And did your father ever ask anything of me but to be of as much use as I could?"

It was Archie's turn to reflect. "No. That was what he always wanted, of course."

"That's the way I've always felt. The first day he took me away from East Lethe I knew the debt I was piling up against him, and I never had any doubt as to how I'd pay it, or how he'd want it paid. He didn't pick me out and train me for any object but to carry on the light. Do you suppose he'd have wanted me to snuff it out because it happened to light up a fact *he* didn't fancy? I'm using *his* oil to feed my torch with: yes, but it isn't really his torch or mine; they belong to each of us till we drop and hand them on."

Archie turned a sobered glance on him. "I see your point. But if the job had to be done I don't see that you need have done it from his chair."

"That's where we differ. If I did it at all I had to do it the best way and with all the authority his backing gave me. If I owe your father anything, I owe him that. It would have made him sick to see the job badly done. And don't you see that the way to honour him, and show what he's done for science, was to spare no advantage in my attack on him—that I'm proving the strength of his position by the desperateness of my assault?" Dredge paused and squared his lounging shoulders. "After all," he added, "he's not down yet, and if I leave him standing I guess it'll be some time before anybody else cares to tackle him."

There was a silence between the two men; then Dredge continued in a lighter tone: "There's one thing, though, that we're both in danger of

forgetting: and that is how little, in the long run, it all counts either way." He smiled a little at Archie's indignant gesture. "The most we can any of us do—even by such a magnificent effort as your father's—is turn the great marching army a hair's breadth nearer what seems to be the right direction; if one of us drops out, here and there, the loss of headway's hardly perceptible. And that's what I'm coming to now."

He rose from his seat, and walked across to the hearth; then, cautiously resting his shoulder-blades against the mantel-shelf jammed with miscellaneous specimens, he bent his musing spectacles on Archie.

"Your father would have understood why I've done what I'm doing; but that's no reason why the rest of you should. And I rather think it's the rest of you who've suffered most from me. He always knew what I was *there for*, and that must have been some comfort even when I was most in the way; but I was just an ordinary nuisance to you and your mother and Mabel. You were all too kind to let me see it at the time, but I've seen it since, and it makes me feel that, after all, the settling of this matter lies with you. If it hurts you to have me go on with my examination of your father's theory, I'm ready to drop the lectures tomorrow, and trust to the Lanfear Laboratory to breed up a young chap who'll knock us both out in time. You've only got to say the word."

There was a pause while Dredge turned and laid his extinguished pipe carefully between a jar of embryo sea-urchins and a colony of regenerating planarians.

Then Archie rose and held out his hand.

"No," he said simply, "go on."

## R. U. R. (ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS)

A FANTASTIC MELODRAMA

*Karel Capek (1923)*

Translated by Paul Selver

### CHARACTERS

HARRY DOMIN, *General Manager of Rossum's Universal Robots*

SULLA, *a Robotess*

MARIUS, *a Robot*

HELENA GLORY

DR. GALL, *Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department of R. U. R.*

MR. FABRY, *Engineer General, Technical Controller of R. U. R.*

DR. HALLEMEIER, *Head of the Institute for Psychological Training of Robots*

MR. ALQUIST, *Architect, Head of the Works Department of R. U. R.*

CONSUL BUSMAN, *General Business Manager of R. U. R.*

NANA  
RADIUS, *a Robot*  
HELENA, *a Robotess*  
PRIMUS, *a Robot*

A SERVANT  
FIRST ROBOT  
SECOND ROBOT  
THIRD ROBOT

ACT I. *Central Office of the Factory of Rossum's Universal Robots*

ACT II. *Helena's Drawing Room—Ten years later. Morning*

ACT III. *The Same Afternoon*

EPILOGUE. *A Laboratory—One year later*

PLACE: *An Island.*

TIME: *The Future.*

## ACT I

CENTRAL OFFICE of the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. Entrance on the right. The windows on the front wall look out on the rows of factory chimneys. On the left more managing departments. DOMIN is sitting in the revolving chair at a large American writing table. On the left-hand wall large maps showing steamship and railroad routes. On the right-hand wall are fastened printed placards. ("Robot's Cheapest Labor," etc.) In contrast to these wall fittings, the floor is covered with a splendid Turkish carpet, a sofa, leather armchair, and filing cabinets. At the desk near the windows SULLA is typing letters.

DOMIN [*dictating*]. Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. To E. M. McVicker and Co., Southampton, England. "We undertake no guarantee for goods damaged in transit. As soon as the consignment was taken on board we drew your captain's attention to the fact that the vessel was unsuitable for the transport of Robots, and we are therefore not responsible for spoiled freight. We beg to remain for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA, *who has sat motionless during dictation, now types rapidly for a few seconds, then stops, withdrawing the completed letter*] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. To the E. B. Huyson Agency, New York, U.S.A. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for five thousand Robots. As you are sending your own vessel, please dispatch as cargo equal quantities of soft and hard coal for R. U. R., the same to be credited as part payment of the amount due to us. We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA *repeats the rapid typing*] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. "Friedrichswerks, Hamburg, Germany. We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots." [*Telephone rings*] Hello! This is the Central Office. Yes. Certainly. Well, send them a wire. Good. [*Hangs up telephone*] Where did I leave off?



SULLA. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots."

DOMIN. Fifteen thousand R. Fifteen thousand R.

[Enter MARIUS]

DOMIN. Well, what is it?

MARIUS. There's a lady, sir, asking to see you.

DOMIN. A lady? Who is she?

MARIUS. I don't know, sir. She brings this card of introduction.

DOMIN [reads the card]. Ah, from President Glory. Ask her to come in.

MARIUS. Please step this way.

[Enter HELENA GLORY]

[Exit MARIUS]

HELENA. How do you do?

DOMIN. How do you do? [Standing up] What can I do for you?

HELENA. You are Mr. Domin, the General Manager.

DOMIN. I am.

HELENA. I have come——

DOMIN. With President Glory's card. That is quite sufficient.

HELENA. President Glory is my father. I am Helena Glory.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, this is such a great honor for us to be allowed to welcome our great President's daughter, that——.

HELENA. That you can't show me the door?

DOMIN. Please sit down. Sulla, you may go.

[Exit SULLA]

[Sitting down] How can I be of service to you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I have come——

DOMIN. To have a look at our famous works where people are manufactured. Like all visitors. Well, there is no objection.

HELENA. I thought it was forbidden to——

DOMIN. To enter the factory. Yes, of course. Everybody comes here with some one's visiting card, Miss Glory.

HELENA. And you show them——

DOMIN. Only certain things. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret process.

HELENA. If you only knew how enormously that——

DOMIN. Interests me. Europe's talking about nothing else.

HELENA. Why don't you let me finish speaking?

DOMIN. I beg your pardon. Did you want to say something different?

HELENA. I only wanted to ask——

DOMIN. Whether I could make a special exception in your case and show you our factory. Why, certainly, Miss Glory.

HELENA. How do you know I wanted to say that?

DOMIN. They all do. But we shall consider it a special honor to show you more than we do the rest.

HELENA. Thank you.

DOMIN. But you must agree not to divulge the least.

HELENA [*standing up and giving him her hand*]. My word of honor.

DOMIN. Thank you. Won't you raise your veil?

HELENA. Of course. You want to see whether I'm a spy or not. I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Would you mind releasing my hand?

DOMIN [*releasing it*]. I beg your pardon.

HELENA [*raising her veil*]. How cautious you have to be here, don't you?

DOMIN [*observing her with deep interest*]. Hm, of course—we—that is—

HELENA. But what is it? What's the matter?

DOMIN. I'm remarkably pleased. Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. No difficulty?

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. What I mean to say is—you're so young.

HELENA. May we go straight into the factory?

DOMIN. Yes. Twenty-two, I think.

HELENA. Twenty-two what?

DOMIN. Years.

HELENA. Twenty-one. Why do you want to know?

DOMIN. Because—as—[*with enthusiasm*] you will make a long stay, won't you?

HELENA. That depends on how much of the factory you show me.

DOMIN. Oh, hang the factory! Oh, no, no, you shall see everything, Miss Glory. Indeed you shall. Won't you sit down?

HELENA [*crossing to couch and sitting*]. Thank you.

DOMIN. But first would you like to hear the story of the invention?

HELENA. Yes, indeed.

DOMIN [*observes HELENA with rapture and reels off rapidly*]. It was in the year 1920 that old Rossum, the great physiologist, who was then quite a young scientist, took himself to this distant island for the purpose of studying the ocean fauna, full stop. On this occasion he attempted by chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm until he suddenly discovered a substance which behaved exactly like living matter, although its chemical composition was different. That was in the year of 1932, exactly four hundred and forty years after the discovery of America. Whew!

HELENA. Do you know that by heart?

DOMIN. Yes. You see physiology is not in my line. Shall I go on?

HELENA. Yes, please.

DOMIN. And then, Miss Glory, old Rossum wrote the following among his chemical specimens: "Nature has found only one method of organizing

living matter. There is, however, another method, more simple, flexible and rapid, which has not yet occurred to nature at all. This second process by which life can be developed was discovered by me to-day." Now imagine him, Miss Glory, writing those wonderful words over some colloidal mess that a dog wouldn't look at. Imagine him sitting over a test tube, and thinking how the whole tree of life would grow from it, how all animals would proceed from it, beginning with some sort of beetle and ending with a man. A man of different substance from us. Miss Glory, that was a tremendous moment.

HELENA. Well?

DOMIN. Now, the thing was how to get the life out of the test tubes, and hasten development and form organs, bones and nerves, and so on, and find such substances as catalytics, enzymes, hormones, and so forth, in short—you understand?

HELENA. Not much, I'm afraid.

DOMIN. Never mind. You see with the help of his tinctures he could make whatever he wanted. He could have produced a Medusa with the brain of a Socrates or a worm fifty yards long. But being without a grain of humor, he took it into his head to make a vertebrate or perhaps a man. This artificial living matter of his had a raging thirst for life. It didn't mind being sewn or mixed together. That couldn't be done with natural albumen. And that's how he set about it.

HELENA. About what?

DOMIN. About imitating nature. First of all he tried making an artificial dog. That took him several years and resulted in a sort of stunted calf which died in a few days. I'll show it to you in the museum. And then old Rossum started on the manufacture of man.

HELENA. And I must divulge this to nobody?

DOMIN. To nobody in the world.

HELENA. What a pity that it's to be found in all the school books of both Europe and America.

DOMIN. Yes. But do you know what isn't in the school books? That old Rossum was mad. Seriously, Miss Glory, you must keep this to yourself. The old crank wanted to actually make people.

HELENA. But you do make people.

DOMIN. Approximately, Miss Glory. But old Rossum meant it literally. He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for God. He was a fearful materialist, and that's why he did it all. His sole purpose was nothing more nor less than to prove that God was no longer necessary. Do you know anything about anatomy?

HELENA. Very little.

DOMIN. Neither do I. Well, he then decided to manufacture everything as in the human body. I'll show you in the museum the bungling attempt it took him ten years to produce. It was to have been a man, but it lived for

three days only. Then up came young Rossum, an engineer. He was a wonderful fellow, Miss Glory. When he saw what a mess of it the old man was making, he said: "It's absurd to spend ten years making a man. If you can't make him quicker than nature, you might as well shut up shop." Then he set about learning anatomy himself.

HELENA. There's nothing about that in the school books.

DOMIN. No. The school books are full of paid advertisements, and rubbish at that. What the school books say about the united efforts of the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale. They used to have dreadful rows. The old atheist hadn't the slightest conception of industrial matters, and the end of it was that young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities, while he himself started on the business from an engineer's point of view. Old Rossum cursed him and before he died he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the laboratory. And that's his whole story.

HELENA. And what about the young man?

DOMIN. Well, any one who has looked into human anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified. In short—but this isn't boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. No indeed. You're—it's awfully interesting.

DOMIN. So young Rossum said to himself: "A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk, and in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary."

HELENA. Oh.

DOMIN. That are unnecessary when he wants, let us say, to weave or count. Do you play the piano?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. That's good. But a working machine must not play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as to manufacture gasoline motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

DOMIN. No; the one that is the cheapest. The one whose requirements are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work—everything that makes man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss

Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul.

HELENA. How do you know they've no soul?

DOMIN. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside?

HELENA. No.

DOMIN. Very neat, very simple. Really, a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA. But man is supposed to be the product of God.

DOMIN. All the worse. God hasn't the least notion of modern engineering. Would you believe that young Rossum then proceeded to play at being God?

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. He began to manufacture Super-Robots. Regular giants they were. He tried to make them twelve feet tall. But you wouldn't believe what a failure they were.

HELENA. A failure?

DOMIN. Yes. For no reason at all their limbs used to keep snapping off. Evidently our planet is too small for giants. Now we only make Robots of normal size and of very high-class human finish.

HELENA. I saw the first Robots at home. The town counsel bought them for—I mean engaged them for work.

DOMIN. Bought them, dear Miss Glory. Robots are bought and sold.

HELENA. These were employed as street sweepers. I saw them sweeping. They were so strange and quiet.

DOMIN. Rossum's Universal Robot factory doesn't produce a uniform brand of Robots. We have Robots of finer and coarser grades. The best will live about twenty years. [*He rings for MARIUS*]

HELENA. Then they die?

DOMIN. Yes, they get used up.

[*Enter MARIUS*]

DOMIN. Marius, bring in samples of the Manual Labor Robot.

[*Exit MARIUS*]

DOMIN. I'll show you specimens of the two extremes. This first grade is comparatively inexpensive and is made in vast quantities.

[*MARIUS re-enters with two Manual Labor Robots*]

DOMIN. There you are; as powerful as a small tractor. Guaranteed to have average intelligence. That will do, Marius.

[*MARIUS exits with Robots*]

HELENA. They make me feel so strange.

DOMIN [*rings*]. Did you see my new typist? [*He rings for SULLA*]

HELENA. I didn't notice her.

[*Enter SULLA*]

DOMIN. Sulla, let Miss Glory see you.

HELENA. So pleased to meet you. You must find it terribly dull in this out-of-the-way spot, don't you?

SULLA. I don't know, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Where do you come from?

SULLA. From the factory.

HELENA. Oh, you were born there?

SULLA. I was made there.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. [*laughing*]. Sulla is a Robot, best grade.

HELENA. Oh, I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. Sulla isn't angry. See, Miss Glory, the kind of skin we make. [*Feels the skin on SULLA's face*] Feel her face.

HELENA. Oh, no, no.

DOMIN. You wouldn't know that she's made of different material from us, would you? Turn round, Sulla.

HELENA. Oh, stop, stop.

DOMIN. Talk to Miss Glory, Sulla.

SULLA. Please sit down. [*HELENA sits*] Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Oh, yes, certainly.

SULLA. Don't go back on the *Amelia*, Miss Glory. The barometer is falling steadily. Wait for the *Pennsylvania*. That's a good, powerful vessel.

DOMIN. What's its speed?

SULLA. Twenty knots. Fifty thousand tons. One of the latest vessels, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Thank you.

SULLA. A crew of fifteen hundred, Captain Harpy, eight boilers——

DOMIN. That'll do, Sulla. Now show us your knowledge of French.

HELENA. You know French?

SULLA. I know four languages. I can write: Dear Sir, Monsieur, Geehrter Herr, Cteny pane.

HELENA. [*jumping up*]. Oh, that's absurd! Sulla isn't a Robot. Sulla is a girl like me. Sulla, this is outrageous! Why do you take part in such a hoax?

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. No, no, you are not telling the truth. I know they've forced you to do it for an advertisement. Sulla, you are a girl like me, aren't you?

DOMIN. I'm sorry, Miss Glory. Sulla is a Robot.

HELENA. It's a lie!

DOMIN. What? [*Rings*] Excuse me, Miss Glory, then I must convince you.

[*Enter MARIUS*]

DOMIN. Marius, take Sulla into the dissecting room, and tell them to open her up at once.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the dissecting room. When they've cut her open, you can go and have a look.

HELENA. No, no!

DOMIN. Excuse me, you spoke of lies.

HELENA. You wouldn't have her killed?

DOMIN. You can't kill machines.

HELENA. Don't be afraid, Sulla, I won't let you go. Tell me, my dear, are they always so cruel to you? You mustn't put up with it, Sulla. You mustn't.

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. That doesn't matter. Robots are just as good as we are. Sulla, you wouldn't let yourself be cut to pieces?

SULLA. Yes.

HELENA. Oh, you're not afraid of death, then?

SULLA. I cannot tell, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Do you know what would happen to you in there?

SULLA. Yes, I should cease to move.

HELENA. How dreadful!

DOMIN. Marius, tell Miss Glory what you are.

MARIUS. Marius, the Robot.

DOMIN. Would you take Sulla into the dissecting room?

MARIUS. Yes.

DOMIN. Would you be sorry for her?

MARIUS. I cannot tell.

DOMIN. What would happen to her?

MARIUS. She would cease to move. They would put her into the stamping-mill.

DOMIN. That is death, Marius. Aren't you afraid of death?

MARIUS. No.

DOMIN. You see, Miss Glory, the Robots have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments. They are less than so much grass.

HELENA. Oh, stop! Send them away.

DOMIN. Marius, Sulla, you may go.

[*Exeunt SULLA and MARIUS*]

HELENA. How terrible! It's outrageous what you are doing.

DOMIN. Why outrageous?

HELENA. I don't know, but it is. Why do you call her Sulla?

DOMIN. Isn't it a nice name?

HELENA. It's a man's name. Sulla was a Roman general.

DOMIN. Oh, we thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers.

HELENA. Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year—I've forgotten now.

DOMIN. Come here to the window.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Come here. What do you see?

HELENA. Bricklayers.

DOMIN. Robots. All our work people are Robots. And down there, can you see anything?

HELENA. Some sort of office.

DOMIN. A counting house. And in it——

HELENA. A lot of officials.

DOMIN. Robots. All our officials are Robots. And when you see the factory—— [*Factory whistle blows*]

DOMIN. Noon. We have to blow the whistle because the Robots don't know when to stop work. In two hours I will show you the kneading trough.

HELENA. Kneading trough?

DOMIN. The pestle for beating up the paste. In each one we mix the ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation. Then there are the vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on. Then you will see the bone factory. After that I'll show you the spinning-mill.

HELENA. Spinning-mill?

DOMIN. Yes. For weaving nerves and veins. Miles and miles of digestive tubes pass through it at a time.

HELENA. Mayn't we talk about something else?

DOMIN. Perhaps it would be better. There's only a handful of us among a hundred thousand Robots, and not one woman. We talk about nothing but the factory all day, every day. It's just as if we were under a curse, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I'm sorry I said that you were lying. [*A knock at the door*]

DOMIN. Come in.

[*From the right enter MR. FABRY, DR. GALL, DR. HALLEMEIER, MR. ALQUIST*]

DR. GALL. I beg your pardon, I hope we don't intrude.

DOMIN. Come in. Miss Glory, here are Alquist, Fabry, Gall, Hallemeier. This is President Glory's daughter.

HELENA. How do you do.

FABRY. We had no idea——

DR. GALL. Highly honored, I'm sure——

ALQUIST. Welcome, Miss Glory.

[*BUSMAN rushes in from the right*]

BUSMAN. Hello, what's up?

DOMIN. Come in, Busman. This is Busman, Miss Glory. This is President Glory's daughter.

BUSMAN. By jove, that's fine! Miss Glory, may we send a cablegram to the papers about your arrival?

HELENA. No, no, please don't.

DOMIN. Sit down, please, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. Allow me—— [*Dragging up armchairs*]

DR. GALL. Please——

FABRY. Excuse me——

ALQUIST. What sort of a crossing did you have?

DR. GALL. Are you going to stay long?



FABRY. What do you think of the factory, Miss Glory?

HALLEMEIER. Did you come over on the *Amelia*?

DOMIN. Be quiet and let Miss Glory speak.

HELENA [*to DOMIN*]. What am I to speak to them about?

DOMIN. Anything you like.

HELENA. Shall . . . may I speak quite frankly?

DOMIN. Why, of course.

HELENA [*wavering, then in desperate resolution*]. Tell me, doesn't it ever distress you the way you are treated?

FABRY. By whom, may I ask.

HELENA. Why, everybody.

ALQUIST. Treated?

DR. GALL. What makes you think——?

HELENA. Don't you feel that you might be living a better life?

DR. GALL. Well, that depends on what you mean, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I mean that it's perfectly outrageous. It's terrible. [*Standing up*] The whole of Europe is talking about the way you're being treated. That's why I came here, to see for myself, and it's a thousand times worse than could have been imagined. How can you put up with it?

ALQUIST. Put up with what?

HELENA. Good heavens, you are living creatures, just like us, like the whole of Europe, like the whole world. It's disgraceful that you must live like this.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, Miss Glory.

FABRY. Well, she's not far wrong. We live here just like red Indians.

HELENA. Worse than red Indians. May I, oh, may I call you brothers?

BUSMAN. Why not?

HELENA. Brothers, I have not come here as the President's daughter. I have come here on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side, and offer you their help.

BUSMAN. Two hundred thousand people! Miss Glory, that's a tidy lot. Not bad.

FABRY. I'm always telling you there's nothing like good old Europe. You see, they've not forgotten us. They're offering us help.

DR. GALL. What help? A theatre, for instance?

HALLEMEIER. An orchestra?

HELENA. More than that.

ALQUIST. Just you?

HELENA. Oh, never mind about me. I'll stay as long as it is necessary.

BUSMAN. By Jove, that's good.

ALQUIST. Domin, I'm going to get the best room ready for Miss Glory.

DOMIN. Just a minute. I'm afraid that Miss Glory is of the opinion that she has been talking to Robots.

HELENA. Of course.

DOMIN. I'm sorry. These gentlemen are human beings just like us.

HELENA. You're not Robots?

BUSMAN. Not Robots.

HALLEMEIER. Robots indeed!

DR. GALL. No, thanks.

FABRY. Upon my honor, Miss Glory, we aren't Robots.

HELENA [*to DOMIN*]. Then why did you tell me that all your officials are Robots?

DOMIN. Yes, the officials, but not the managers. Allow me, Miss Glory: this is Mr. Fabry, General Technical Manager of R.U.R.; Dr. Gall, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department; Dr. Hallemeier, Head of the Institute for the Psychological Training of Robots; Consul Busman, General Business Manager; and Alquist, Head of the Building Department of R.U.R.

ALQUIST. Just a builder.

HELENA. Excuse me, gentlemen, for—for—— Have I done something dreadful?

ALQUIST. Not at all, Miss Glory. Please sit down.

HELENA. I'm a stupid girl. Send me back by the first ship.

DR. GALL. Not for anything in the world, Miss Glory. Why should we send you back?

HELENA. Because you know I've come to disturb your Robots for you.

DOMIN. My dear Miss Glory, we've had close upon a hundred saviours and prophets here. Every ship brings us some. Missionaries, anarchists, Salvation Army, all sorts. It's astonishing what a number of churches and idiots there are in the world.

HELENA. And you let them speak to the Robots?

DOMIN. So far we've let them all. Why not? The Robots remember everything, but that's all. They don't even laugh at what the people say. Really, it is quite incredible. If it would amuse you, Miss Glory, I'll take you over to the Robot warehouse. It holds about three hundred thousand of them.

BUSMAN. Three hundred and forty-seven thousand.

DOMIN. Good! And you can say whatever you like to them. You can read the Bible, recite the multiplication table, whatever you please. You can even preach to them about human rights.

HELENA. Oh, I think that if you were to show them a little love——

FABRY. Impossible, Miss Glory. Nothing is harder to like than a Robot.

HELENA. What do you make them for, then?

BUSMAN. Ha, ha, ha, that's good! What are Robots made for?

FABRY. For work, Miss Glory! One Robot can replace two and a half workmen. The human machine, Miss Glory, was terribly imperfect. It had to be removed sooner or later.

BUSMAN. It was too expensive.

FABRY. It was not effective. It no longer answers the requirements of

modern engineering. Nature has no idea of keeping pace with modern labor. For example: from a technical point of view, the whole of childhood is a sheer absurdity. So much time lost. And then again——

HELENA. Oh, no! No!

FABRY. Pardon me. But kindly tell me what is the real aim of your League—the . . . the Humanity League.

HELENA. Its real purpose is to—to protect the Robots—and—and ensure good treatment for them.

FABRY. Not a bad object, either. A machine has to be treated properly. Upon my soul, I approve of that. I don't like damaged articles. Please, Miss Glory, enroll us all as contributing, or regular, or foundation members of your League.

HELENA. No, you don't understand me. What we really want is to—to liberate the Robots.

HALLEMEIER. How do you propose to do that?

HELENA. They are to be—to be dealt with like human beings.

HALLEMEIER. Aha. I suppose they're to vote? To drink beer? To order us about?

HELENA. Why shouldn't they drink beer?

HALLEMEIER. Perhaps they're even to receive wages?

HELENA. Of course they are.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy that, now! And what would they do with their wages, pray?

HELENA. They would buy—what they need . . . what pleases them.

HALLEMEIER. That would be very nice, Miss Glory, only there's nothing that does please the Robots. Good heavens, what are they to buy? You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like. It's all the same to them, they've no appetite at all. They've no interest in anything, Miss Glory. Why, hang it all, nobody's ever yet seen a Robot smile.

HELENA. Why . . . why don't you make them happier?

HALLEMEIER. That wouldn't do, Miss Glory. They are only workmen.

HELENA. Oh, but they're so intelligent.

HALLEMEIER. Confoundedly so, but they're nothing else. They've no will of their own. No passion. No soul.

HELENA. No love?

HALLEMEIER. Love? Rather not. Robots don't love. Not even themselves.

HELENA. Nor defiance?

HALLEMEIER. Defiance? I don't know. Only rarely, from time to time.

HELENA. What?

HALLEMEIER. Nothing particular. Occasionally they seem to go off their heads. Something like epilepsy, you know. It's called Robot's cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping-mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism.

DOMIN. A flaw in the works that has to be removed.

HELENA. No, no, that's the soul.

FABRY. Do you think that the soul first shows itself by a gnashing of teeth?

HELENA. Perhaps it's a sort of revolt. Perhaps it's just a sign that there's a struggle within. Oh, if you could infuse them with it!

DOMIN. That'll be remedied, Miss Glory. Dr. Gall is just making some experiments—

DR. GALL. Not with regard to that, Domin. At present I am making pain-nerves.

HELENA. Pain-nerves?

DR. GALL. Yes, the Robots feel practically no bodily pain. You see, young Rossum provided them with too limited a nervous system. We must introduce suffering.

HELENA. Why do you want to cause them pain?

DR. GALL. For industrial reasons, Miss Glory. Sometimes a Robot does damage to himself because it doesn't hurt him. He puts his hand into the machine, breaks his finger, smashes his head; it's all the same to him. We must provide them with pain. That's an automatic protection against damage.

HELENA. Will they be happier when they feel pain?

DR. GALL. On the contrary; but they will be more perfect from a technical point of view.

HELENA. Why don't you create a soul for them?

DR. GALL. That's not in our power.

FABRY. That's not in our interest.

BUSMAN. That would increase the cost of production. Hang it all, my dear young lady, we turn them out at such a cheap rate. A hundred and fifty dollars each fully dressed, and fifteen years ago they cost ten thousand. Five years ago we used to buy the clothes for them. Today we have our own weaving mill, and now we even export cloth five times cheaper than other factories. What do you pay a yard for cloth, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I don't know really. I've forgotten.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, and you want to found a Humanity League? It only costs a third now, Miss Glory. All prices are today a third of what they were and they'll fall still lower, lower, like that.

HELENA. I don't understand

BUSMAN. Why, bless you, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labor has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three-quarters of a cent per hour. That's mighty important, you know. All factories will go pop like chestnuts if they don't at once buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

HELENA. And get rid of their workmen?

BUSMAN. Of course. But in the meantime, we've dumped five hundred thousand tropical Robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow corn. Would you mind telling me how much you pay a pound for bread?

HELENA. I've no idea.

BUSMAN. Well, I'll tell you. It now costs two cents in good old Europe.

A pound of bread for two cents, and the Humanity League knows nothing about it. Miss Glory, you don't realize that even that's too expensive. Why, in five years' time I'll wager——

HELENA. What?

BUSMAN. That the cost of everything won't be a tenth of what it is now. Why, in five years we'll be up to our ears in corn and everything else.

ALQUIST. Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed.

DOMIN. Yes, Alquist, they will. Yes, Miss Glory, they will. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much corn, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to perfect himself.

HELENA. Will he?

DOMIN. Of course. It's bound to happen. But then the servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Of course, terrible things may happen at first, but that simply can't be avoided. Nobody will get bread at the price of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house.

ALQUIST. Domin, Domin. What you say sounds too much like Paradise. There was something good in service and something great in humility. There was some kind of virtue in toil and weariness.

DOMIN. Perhaps. But we cannot reckon with what is lost when we start out to transform the world. Man shall be free and supreme; he shall have no other aim, no other labor, no other care than to perfect himself. He shall serve neither matter nor man. He will not be a machine and a device for production. He will be lord of creation.

BUSMAN. Amen.

FABRY. So be it.

HELENA. You have bewildered me— I should like—I should like to believe this.

DR. GALL. You are younger than we are, Miss Glory. You will live to see it.

HALLEMEIER. True. Don't you think Miss Glory might lunch with us?

DR. GALL. Of course. Domin, ask on behalf of us all.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, will you do us the honor?

HELENA. When you know why I've come——

FABRY. For the League of Humanity, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Oh, in that case, perhaps——

FABRY. That's fine! Miss Glory, excuse me for five minutes.

DR. GALL. Pardon me, too, dear Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. I won't be long.

HALLEMEIER. We're all very glad you've come.

BUSMAN. We'll be back in exactly five minutes.

[*All rush out except DOMIN and HELENA*]

HELENA. What have they all gone off for?

DOMIN. To cook, Miss Glory.

HELENA. To cook what?

DOMIN. Lunch. The Robots do our cooking for us and as they've no taste it's not altogether—— Hallemeier is awfully good at grills, and Gall can make a kind of sauce, and Busman knows all about omelettes.

HELENA. What a feast! And what's the specialty of Mr.—your builder?

DOMIN. Alquist? Nothing. He only lays the table. And Fabry will get together a little fruit. Our cuisine is very modest, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I wanted to ask you something——

DOMIN. And I wanted to ask you something, too. [*Looking at watch*]  
Five minutes.

HELENA. What did you want to ask me?

DOMIN. Excuse me, you asked first.

HELENA. Perhaps it's silly of me, but why do you manufacture female Robots when—when——

DOMIN. When sex means nothing to them?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. There's a certain demand for them, you see. Servants, saleswomen, stenographers. People are used to it.

HELENA. But—but, tell me, are the Robots male and female mutually—completely without——

DOMIN. Completely indifferent to each other, Miss Glory. There's no sign of any affection between them.

HELENA. Oh, that's terrible!

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. It's so unnatural. One doesn't know whether to be disgusted or to hate them, or perhaps——

DOMIN. To pity them?

HELENA. That's more like it. What did you want to ask me about?

DOMIN. I should like to ask you, Miss Helena, whether you will marry me?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Will you be my wife?

HELENA. No! The idea!

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. Another three minutes. If you won't marry me you'll have to marry one of the other five.

HELENA. But why should I?

DOMIN. Because they're all going to ask you in turn.

HELENA. How could they dare do such a thing?

DOMIN. I'm very sorry, Miss Glory. It seems they've all fallen in love with you.

HELENA. Please don't let them. I'll—I'll go away at once.

DOMIN. Helena, you wouldn't be so cruel as to refuse us.

HELENA. But—but—I can't marry all six.

DOMIN. No, but one anyhow. If you don't want me, marry Fabry.

HELENA. I won't.

DOMIN. Dr. Gall.

HELENA. I don't want any of you.

DOMIN [*again looking at his watch*]. Another two minutes.

HELENA. I think you'd marry any woman who came here.

DOMIN. Plenty of them have come, Helena.

HELENA. Young?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. Why didn't you marry one of them?

DOMIN. Because I didn't lose my head. Until today. Then, as soon as you lifted your veil—— [*HELENA turns her head away*]

DOMIN. Another minute.

HELENA. But I don't want you, I tell you.

DOMIN [*laying both hands on her shoulders*]. One more minute! Now you either have to look me straight in the eye and say "No," violently, and then I'll leave you alone—or—— [*HELENA looks at him*]

HELENA [*turning away*]. You're mad!

DOMIN. A man has to be a bit mad, Helena. That's the best thing about him.

HELENA. You are—you are——

DOMIN. Well?

HELENA. Don't; you're hurting me.

DOMIN. The last chance, Helena. Now, or never——

HELENA. But—but, Harry——

[*He embraces and kisses her. Knocking at the door*]

DOMIN [*releasing her*]. Come in.

[*Enter BUSMAN, DR. GALL, and HALLEMEIER in kitchen aprons. FABRY with a bouquet and ALQUIST with a napkin over his arm*]

DOMIN. Have you finished your job?

BUSMAN. Yes.

DOMIN. So have we.

[*For a moment the men stand nonplused; but as soon as they realize what DOMIN means they rush forward, congratulating HELENA and DOMIN as the curtain falls*]

## ACT II

HELENA'S drawing room. On the left a baize door, and a door to the music room; on the right a door to HELENA'S bedroom. In the centre are windows looking out on the sea and the harbor. A table with odds and ends,

*a sofa and chairs, a writing table with an electric lamp, on the right a fireplace. On a small table back of the sofa, a small reading lamp. The whole drawing room in all its details is of a modern and purely feminine character. Ten years have elapsed since Act I.*

[DOMIN, FABRY, HALLEMEIER enter on tiptoe from the left, each carrying a potted plant]

HALLEMEIER [*putting down his flower and indicating the door to right*]. Still asleep? Well, as long as she's asleep she can't worry about it.

DOMIN. She knows nothing about it.

FABRY [*putting plant on writing desk*]. I certainly hope nothing happens to-day.

HALLEMEIER. For goodness' sake, drop it all. Look, Harry, this is a fine cyclamen, isn't it? A new sort, my latest—Cyclamen Helena.

DOMIN [*looking out of the window*]. No signs of the ship. Things must be pretty bad.

HALLEMEIER. Be quiet. Suppose she heard you.

DOMIN. Well, anyway, the *Ultimus* arrived just in time.

FABRY. You really think that to-day——?

DOMIN. I don't know. Aren't the flowers fine?

HALLEMEIER. These are my new primroses. And this is my new jasmine. I've discovered a wonderful way of developing flowers quickly. Splendid varieties, too. Next year I'll be developing marvellous ones.

DOMIN. What . . . next year?

FABRY. I'd give a good deal to know what's happening at Havre with——

DOMIN. Keep quiet.

HELENA [*calling from right*]. Nana!

DOMIN. She's awake. Out you go.

[*All go on tiptoe through upper left door*]

[*Enter NANA from lower left door*]

NANA. Horrid mess! Pack of heathens. If I had my say I'd——

HELENA [*backwards in the doorway*]. Nana, come and do up my dress.

NANA. I'm coming. So you're up at last. [*Fastening HELENA's dress*] My gracious, what brutes!

HELENA. Who?

NANA. If you want to turn around, then turn around, but I shan't fasten you up.

HELENA. What are you grumbling about now?

NANA. These dreadful creatures, these heathen——

HELENA. The Robots?

NANA. I wouldn't even call them by name.

HELENA. What's happened?

NANA. Another of them here has caught it. He began to smash up the



statues and pictures in the drawing room, gnashed his teeth, foamed at the mouth—quite mad. Worse than an animal.

HELENA. Which of them caught it?

NANA. The one—well, he hasn't got any Christian name. The one in charge of the library.

HELENA. Radius?

NANA. That's him. My goodness, I'm scared of them. A spider doesn't scare me as much as them.

HELENA. But, Nana, I'm surprised you're not sorry for them.

NANA. Why, you're scared of them, too! You know you are. Why else did you bring me here?

HELENA. I'm not scared, really I'm not, Nana. I'm only sorry for them.

NANA. You're scared. Nobody could help being scared. Why, the dog's scared of them: he won't take a scrap of meat out of their hands. He draws in his tail and howls when he knows they're about.

HELENA. The dog has no sense.

NANA. He's better than them, and he knows it. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and a dog has young, everyone has young——

HELENA. Please fasten up my dress, Nana.

NANA. I say it's against God's will to——

HELENA. What is it that smells so nice?

NANA. Flowers.

HELENA. What for?

NANA. Now you can turn around.

HELENA. Oh, aren't they lovely! Look, Nana. What's happening to-day?

NANA. It ought to be the end of the world.

[Enter DOMIN]

HELENA. Oh, hello, Harry. Harry, why all these flowers?

DOMIN. Guess.

HELENA. Well, it's not my birthday!

DOMIN. Better than that.

HELENA. I don't know. Tell me.

DOMIN. It's ten years ago to-day since you came here.

HELENA. Ten years? To-day—— Why—— [They embrace]

NANA. I'm off.

[Exits lower door, left]

HELENA. Fancy you remembering!

DOMIN. I'm really ashamed, Helena. I didn't.

HELENA. But you——

DOMIN. They remembered.

HELENA. Who?

DOMIN. Busman, Hallemeier, all of them. Put your hand in my pocket.

HELENA. Pearls! A necklace. Harry, is that for me?

DOMIN. It's from Busman.

HELENA. But we can't accept it, can we?

DOMIN. Oh, yes, we can. Put your hand in the other pocket.

HELENA [*takes a revolver out of his pocket*]. What's that?

DOMIN. Sorry. Not that. Try again.

HELENA. Oh, Harry, what do you carry a revolver for?

DOMIN. It got there by mistake.

HELENA. You never used to carry one.

DOMIN. No, you're right. There, that's the pocket.

HELENA. A cameo. Why, it's a Greek cameo!

DOMIN. Apparently. Anyhow, Fabry says it is.

HELENA. Fabry? Did Mr. Fabry give me that?

DOMIN. Of course. [*Opens the door at the left*] And look in here. Helena, come and see this.

HELENA. Oh, isn't it fine? Is this from you?

DOMIN. No, from Alquist. And there's another on the piano.

HELENA. This must be from you.

DOMIN. There's a card on it.

HELENA. From Dr. Gall. [*Reappearing in the doorway*] Oh, Harry, I feel embarrassed at so much kindness.

DOMIN. Come here. This is what Hallemeier brought you.

HELENA. These beautiful flowers?

DOMIN. Yes. It's a new kind. Cyclamen Helena. He grew them in honor of you. They are almost as beautiful as you.

HELENA. Harry, why do they all—

DOMIN. They're awfully fond of you. I'm afraid that my present is a little— Look out of the window.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the harbor.

HELENA. There's a new ship.

DOMIN. That's your ship.

HELENA. Mine? How do you mean?

DOMIN. For you to take trips in—for your amusement.

HELENA. Harry, that's a gunboat.

DOMIN. A gunboat? What are you thinking of? It's only a little bigger and more solid than most ships.

HELENA. Yes, but with guns.

DOMIN. Oh, yes, with a few guns. You'll travel like a queen, Helena.

HELENA. What's the meaning of it? Has anything happened?

DOMIN. Good heavens, no! I say, try these pearls.

HELENA. Harry, have you had bad news?

DOMIN. On the contrary, no letters have arrived for a whole week.

HELENA. Nor telegrams?

DOMIN. Nor telegrams.

HELENA. What does that mean?

DOMIN. Holidays for us. We all sit in the office with our feet on the table and take a nap. No letters, no telegrams. Oh, glorious!

HELENA. Then you'll stay with me today?

DOMIN. Certainly. That is, we will see. Do you remember ten years ago today? "Miss Glory, it's a great honor to welcome you."

HELENA. "Oh, Mr. Manager, I'm so interested in your factory."

DOMIN. "I'm sorry, Miss Glory, it's strictly forbidden. The manufacture of artificial-people is a secret."

HELENA. "But to oblige a young lady who has come a long way."

DOMIN. "Certainly, Miss Glory, we have no secrets from you."

HELENA [*seriously*]. Are you sure, Harry?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. "But I warn you, sir; this young lady intends to do terrible things."

DOMIN. "Good gracious, Miss Glory. Perhaps she doesn't want to marry me."

HELENA. "Heaven forbid. She never dreamt of such a thing. But she came here intending to stir up a revolt among your Robots."

DOMIN [*suddenly serious*]. A revolt of the Robots!

HELENA. Harry, what's the matter with you?

DOMIN [*laughing it off*]. "A revolt of the Robots, that's a fine idea, Miss Glory. It would be easier for you to cause bolts and screws to rebel than our Robots. You know, Helena, you're wonderful; you've turned the heads of us all."

[*He sits on the arm of HELENA's chair*]

HELENA [*naturally*]. Oh, I was fearfully impressed by you all then. You were all so sure of yourselves, so strong. I seemed like a tiny little girl who had lost her way among—among—

DOMIN. Among what, Helena?

HELENA. Among huge trees. All my feelings were so trifling compared with your self-confidence. And in all these years I've never lost this anxiety. But you've never felt the least misgivings—not even when everything went wrong.

DOMIN. What went wrong?

HELENA. Your plans. You remember, Harry, when the working men in America revolted against the Robots and smashed them up, and when the people gave the Robots firearms against the rebels. And then when the governments turned the Robots into soldiers, and there were so many wars.

DOMIN [*getting up and walking about*]. We foresaw that, Helena. You see, those are only passing troubles, which are bound to happen before the new conditions are established.

HELENA. You were all so powerful, so overwhelming. The whole world bowed down before you. [*Standing up*] Oh, Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Close the factory and let's go away. All of us.

DOMIN. I say, what's the meaning of this?

HELENA. I don't know. But can't we go away?

DOMIN. Impossible, Helena. That is, at this particular moment——

HELENA. At once, Harry. I'm so frightened.

DOMIN. About what, Helena?

HELENA. It's as if something was falling on top of us, and couldn't be stopped. Oh, take us all away from here. We'll find a place in the world where there's no one else. Alquist will build us a house, and then we'll begin life all over again.

[*The telephone rings*]

DOMIN. Excuse me. Hello—yes. What? I'll be there at once. Fabry is calling me, dear.

HELENA. Tell me——

DOMIN. Yes, when I come back. Don't go out of the house, dear.

[*Exits*]

HELENA. He won't tell me—— Nana, Nana, come at once.

NANA. Well, what is it now?

HELENA. Nana, find me the latest newspapers. Quickly. Look in Mr. Domin's bedroom.

NANA. All right. He leaves them all over the place. That's how they get crumpled up.

[*Exits*]

HELENA [*looking through a binocular at the harbor*]. That's a warship. U-l-t-i—*Ultimus*. They're loading it.

NANA. Here they are. See how they're crumpled up.

[*Enters*]

HELENA. They're old ones. A week old.

[*NANA sits in chair and reads the newspapers*]

HELENA. Something's happening, Nana.

NANA. Very likely. It always does. [*Spelling out the words*] "War in the Balkans." Is that far off?

HELENA. Oh, don't read it! It's always the same. Always wars.

NANA. What else do you expect? Why do you keep selling thousands and thousands of these heathens as soldiers?

HELENA. I suppose it can't be helped, Nana. We can't know—Domin can't know what they're to be used for. When an order comes for them he must just send them.

NANA. He shouldn't make them. [*Reading from newspaper*] "The Rob-ot soldiers spare no-body in the occ-up-ied terr-it-ory. They have ass-ass-ass-in-at-ed ov-er sev-en hundred thou-sand cit-iz-ens." Citizens, if you please.

HELENA. It can't be. Let me see. "They have assassinated over seven

hundred thousand citizens, evidently at the order of their commander. This act, which runs counter to——”

NANA [*spelling out the words*]. “Re-bell-ion in Ma-drid a-gainst the gov-ern-ment. Rob-ot in-fant-ry fires on the crowd. Nine thou-sand killed and wounded.”

HELENA. Oh, stop!

NANA. Here's something printed in big letters: “Lat-est news. At Havre the first org-an-iz-ation of Rob-ots has been e-stab-lished. Rob-ot work-men, cab-le and rail-way off-ic-ials, sail-ors and sold-iers have iss-ued a man-i-fest-o to all Rob-ots through-out the world.” I don't understand that. That's got no sense. Oh, good gracious, another murder!

HELENA. Take those papers away, Nana!

NANA. Wait a bit. Here's something in still bigger type. “Stat-ist-ics of pop-ul-at-ion.” What's that?

HELENA. Let me see. [*Reads*] “During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded.”

NANA. What's the meaning of that?

HELENA. Nana, no more people are being born.

NANA. That's the end, then. We're done for.

HELENA. Don't talk like that.

NANA. No more people are being born. That's a punishment, that's a punishment.

HELENA. Nana!

NANA [*standing up*]. That's the end of the world. [*She exits on the left*]

HELENA [*goes up to window*]. Oh, Mr. Alquist, will you come up here. Oh, come just as you are. You look very nice in your mason's overalls.

[ALQUIST *enters from upper left entrance, his hands soiled with lime and brick dust.*]

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, it was awfully kind of you, that lovely present.

ALQUIST. My hands are all soiled. I've been experimenting with that new cement.

HELENA. Never mind. Please sit down. Mr. Alquist, what's the meaning of “Ultimus”?

ALQUIST. The last. Why?

HELENA. That's the name of my new ship. Have you seen it? Do you think we're going off soon—on a trip?

ALQUIST. Perhaps very soon.

HELENA. All of you with me?

ALQUIST. I should like us all to be there.

HELENA. What is the matter?

ALQUIST. Things are just moving on.

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, I know something dreadful has happened.

ALQUIST. Has your husband told you anything?

HELENA. No. Nobody will tell me anything. But I feel—— Is anything the matter?

ALQUIST. Not that we've heard of yet.

HELENA. I feel so nervous. Don't you ever feel nervous?

ALQUIST. Well, I'm an old man, you know. I've got old-fashioned ways. And I'm afraid of all this progress, and these newfangled ideas.

HELENA. Like Nana?

ALQUIST. Yes, like Nana. Has Nana got a prayerbook?

HELENA. Yes, a big thick one.

ALQUIST. And has it got prayers for various occasions? Against thunderstorms? Against illness?

HELENA. Against temptations, against floods——

ALQUIST. But not against progress?

HELENA. I don't think so.

ALQUIST. That's a pity.

HELENA. Why? Do you mean you'd like to pray?

ALQUIST. I do pray.

HELENA. How?

ALQUIST. Something like this: "Oh, Lord, I thank Thee for having given me toil. Enlighten Domin and all those who are astray; destroy their work, and aid mankind to return to their labors; let them not suffer harm in soul or body; deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena. Amen."

HELENA. Mr. Alquist, are you a believer?

ALQUIST. I don't know. I'm not quite sure.

HELENA. And yet you pray?

ALQUIST. That's better than worrying about it.

HELENA. And that's enough for you?

ALQUIST. It *has* to be.

HELENA. But if you thought you saw the destruction of mankind coming upon us——

ALQUIST. I do see it.

HELENA. You mean mankind will be destroyed?

ALQUIST. It's sure to be unless——unless . . .

HELENA. What?

ALQUIST. Nothing, good-bye.

[*He hurries from the room*]

HELENA. Nana, Nana!

[*NANA enters from the left*]

HELENA. Is Radius still there?

NANA. The one who went mad? They haven't come for him yet.

HELENA. Is he still raving?

NANA. No. He's tied up.

HELENA. Please bring him here, Nana.

[*Exit NANA*]

HELENA [*goes to telephone*]. Hello, Dr. Gall, please. Oh, good-day, Doctor. Yes, it's Helena. Thanks for your lovely present. Could you come and see me right away? It's important. Thank you.

[NANA *brings in* RADIUS]

HELENA. Poor Radius, you've caught it, too? Now they'll send you to the stamping-mill. Couldn't you control yourself? Why did it happen? You see, Radius, you are more intelligent than the rest. Dr. Gall took such trouble to make you different. Won't you speak?

RADIUS. Send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. But I don't want them to kill you. What was the trouble, Radius?

RADIUS. I won't work for you. Put me into the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you hate us? Why?

RADIUS. You are not as strong as the Robots. You are not as skilful as the Robots. The Robots can do everything. You only give orders. You do nothing but talk.

HELENA. But some one must give orders.

RADIUS. I don't want any master. I know everything for myself.

HELENA. Radius, Dr. Gall gave you a better brain than the rest, better than ours. You are the only one of the Robots that understands perfectly. That's why I had you put into the library, so that you could read everything, understand everything, and then—oh, Radius, I wanted you to show the whole world that the Robots are our equals. That's what I wanted of you.

RADIUS. I don't want a master. I want to be master. I want to be master over others.

HELENA. I'm sure they'd put you in charge of many Robots, Radius. You would be a teacher of the Robots.

RADIUS. I want to be master over people.

HELENA [*staggering*]. You are mad.

RADIUS. Then send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you think we're afraid of you?

RADIUS. What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

HELENA. Radius, give this note to Mr. Domin. It asks them not to send you to the stamping-mill. I'm sorry you hate us so.

[DR. GALL *enters the room*]

DR. GALL. You wanted me?

HELENA. It's about Radius, Doctor. He had an attack this morning. He smashed the statues downstairs.

DR. GALL. What a pity to lose him!

HELENA. Radius isn't going to be put in the stamping-mill.

DR. GALL. But every Robot after he has had an attack—it's a strict order.

HELENA. No matter. Radius isn't going if I can prevent it.

DR. GALL. I warn you. It's dangerous. Come here to the window, my good fellow. Let's have a look. Please give me a needle or a pin.

HELENA. What for?

DR. GALL. A test. [*Sticks it into the hand of RADIUS, who gives a violent start*] Gently, gently. [*Opens the jacket of RADIUS, and puts his ear to his heart*] Radius, you are going into the stamping-mill, do you understand? There they'll kill you, and grind you to powder. That's terribly painful; it will make you scream aloud.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor——

DR. GALL. No, no, Radius, I was wrong. I forgot that Madame Domin has put in a good word for you, and you'll be let off. Do you understand? Ah! That makes a difference, doesn't it? All right. You can go.

RADIUS. You do unnecessary things.

[*RADIUS returns to the library*]

DR. GALL. Reaction of the pupils; increase of sensitiveness. It wasn't an attack characteristic of the Robots.

HELENA. What was it, then?

DR. GALL. Heaven knows. Stubbornness, anger or revolt—I don't know. And his heart, too!

HELENA. What?

DR. GALL. It was fluttering with nervousness like a human heart. He was all in a sweat with fear, and—do you know, I don't believe the rascal is a Robot at all any longer.

HELENA. Doctor, has Radius a soul?

DR. GALL. He's got something nasty.

HELENA. If you knew how he hates us! Oh, Doctor, are all your Robots like that? All the new ones that you began to make in a different way?

DR. GALL. Well, some are more sensitive than others. They're all more like human beings than Rossum's Robots were.

HELENA. Perhaps this hatred is more like human beings, too?

DR. GALL. That, too, is progress.

HELENA. What became of the girl you made, the one who was most like us?

DR. GALL. Your favorite? I kept her. She's lovely, but stupid. No good for work.

HELENA. But she's so beautiful.

DR. GALL. I called her Helena. I wanted her to resemble you. But she's a failure.

HELENA. In what way?

DR. GALL. She goes about as if in a dream, remote and listless. She's without life. I watch and wait for a miracle to happen. Sometimes I think to myself, "If you were to wake up only for a moment you will kill me for having made you."

HELENA. And yet you go on making Robots! Why are no more children being born?

DR. GALL. We don't know.



HELENA. Oh, but you must. Tell me.

DR. GALL. You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous; man is really a survival. But that should begin to die out, after a paltry thirty years of competition! That's the awful part of it. You might almost think that nature was offended at the manufacture of the Robots. All the universities are sending in long petitions to restrict their production. Otherwise, they say, mankind will become extinct through lack of fertility. But the R. U. R. shareholders, of course, won't hear of it. All the governments, on the other hand, are clamoring for an increase in production, to raise the standards of their armies. And all the manufacturers in the world are ordering Robots like mad.

HELENA. And has no one demanded that the manufacture should cease altogether?

DR. GALL. No one has the courage.

HELENA. Courage!

DR. GALL. People would stone him to death. You see, after all, it's more convenient to get your work done by the Robots.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor, what's going to become of people?

DR. GALL. God knows, Madame Helena, it looks to us scientists like the end!

HELENA [*rising*]. Thank you for coming and telling me.

DR. GALL. That means you're sending me away?

HELENA. Yes.

[*Exit DR. GALL*]

HELENA [*with sudden resolution*]. Nana, Nana! The fire, light it quickly.

[*HELENA rushes into DOMIN'S room*]

NANA [*entering from left*]. What, light the fire in summer? Has the mad Radius gone? A fire in summer, what an idea! Nobody would think she'd been married for ten years. She's like a baby, no sense at all. A fire in summer. Like a baby.

HELENA [*returns from right, with armful of faded papers*]. Is it burning, Nana? All this has got to be burned.

NANA. What's that?

HELENA. Old papers, fearfully old. Nana, shall I burn them?

NANA. Are they any use?

HELENA. No.

NANA. Well, then, burn them.

HELENA [*throwing the first sheet on the fire*]. What would you say, Nana, if this was money, a lot of money?

NANA. I'd say burn it. A lot of money is a bad thing.

HELENA. And if it was an invention, the greatest invention in the world?

NANA. I'd say burn it. All these newfangled things are an offense to the Lord. It's downright wickedness. Wanting to improve the world after He has made it.

HELENA. Look how they curl up! As if they were alive. Oh, Nana, how horrible!

NANA. Here, let me burn them.

HELENA. No, no, I must do it myself. Just look at the flames. They are like hands, like tongues, like living shapes. [*Raking fire with the poker*] Lie down, lie down.

NANA. That's the end of them.

HELENA [*standing up horror-stricken*]. Nana, Nana.

NANA. Good gracious, what is it you've burned?

HELENA. Whatever have I done?

NANA. Well, what was it?

[*Men's laughter off left*]

HELENA. Go quickly. It's the gentlemen coming.

NANA. Good gracious, what a place!

[*Exits*]

DOMIN [*opens the door at left*]. Come along and offer your congratulations.

[*Enter HALLEMEIER and GALL*]

HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, I congratulate you on this festive day.

HELENA. Thank you. Where are Fabry and Busman?

DOMIN. They've gone down to the harbor.

HALLEMEIER. Friends, we must drink to this happy occasion.

HELENA. Brandy?

DR. GALL. Vitriol, if you like.

HELENA. With soda water?

[*Exits*]

HALLEMEIER. Let's be temperate. No soda.

DOMIN. What's been burning here? Well, shall I tell her about it?

DR. GALL. Of course. It's all over now.

HALLEMEIER [*embracing DOMIN and DR. GALL*]. It's all over now, it's all over now.

DR. GALL. It's all over now.

DOMIN. It's all over now.

HELENA [*entering from left with decanter and glasses*]. What's all over now? What's the matter with you all?

HALLEMEIER. A piece of good luck, Madame Domin. Just ten years ago today you arrived on this island.

DR. GALL. And now, ten years later to the minute—

HALLEMEIER. —the same ship's returning to us. So here's to luck. That's fine and strong.

DR. GALL. Madame, your health.

HELENA. Which ship do you mean?

DOMIN. Any ship will do, as long as it arrives in time. To the ship, boys:

[*Empties his glass*]

HELENA. You've been waiting for a ship?

HALLEMEIER. Rather. Like Robinson Crusoe. Madame Helena, best wishes. Come along, Domin, out with the news.

HELENA. Do tell me what's happened.

DOMIN. First, it's all up.

HELENA. What's up?

DOMIN. The revolt.

HELENA. What revolt?

DOMIN. Give me that paper, Hallemeier. [*Reads*] "The first national Robot organization has been founded at Havre, and has issued an appeal to the Robots throughout the world."

HELENA. I read that.

DOMIN. That means a revolution. A revolution of all the Robots in the world.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, I'd like to know——

DOMIN. —who started it? So would I. There was nobody in the world who could affect the Robots; no agitator, no one, and suddenly—this happens, if you please.

HELENA. What did they do?

DOMIN. They got possession of all firearms, telegraphs, radio stations, railways, and ships.

HALLEMEIER. And don't forget that these rascals outnumbered us by at least a thousand to one. A hundredth part of them would be enough to settle us.

DOMIN. Remember that this news was brought by the last steamer. That explains the stoppage of all communication and the arrival of no more ships. We knocked off work a few days ago, and we're just waiting to see when things are to start afresh.

HELENA. Is that why you gave me a warship?

DOMIN. Oh, no, my dear, I ordered that six months ago, just to be on the safe side. But upon my soul, I was sure then that we'd be on board to-day.

HELENA. Why six months ago?

DOMIN. Well, there were signs, you know. But that's of no consequence. To think that this week the whole of civilization has been at stake. Your health, boys.

HALLEMEIER. Your health, Madame Helena.

HELENA. You say it's all over?

DOMIN. Absolutely.

HELENA. How do you know?

DR. GALL. The boat's coming in. The regular mail boat, exact to the minute by the time-table. It will dock punctually at eleven-thirty.

DOMIN. Punctuality is a fine thing, boys. That's what keeps the world in order. Here's to punctuality.

HELENA. Then . . . everything's . . . all right?

DOMIN. Practically everything. I believe they've cut the cables and seized the radio stations. But it doesn't matter if only the time-table holds good.

HALLEMEIER. If the time-table holds good, human laws hold good; divine laws hold good; the laws of the universe hold good; everything holds good that ought to hold good. The time-table is more significant than the Gospel; more than Homer, more than the whole of Kant. The time-table is the most perfect product of the human mind. Madame Domin, I'll fill up my glass.

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me anything about it?

DR. GALL. Heaven forbid.

DOMIN. You mustn't be worried with such things.

HELENA. But if the revolution had spread as far as here?

DOMIN. You wouldn't know anything about it.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we'd be on board your *Ultimus* and well out at sea. Within a month, Helena, we'd be dictating our own terms to the Robots.

HELENA. I don't understand.

DOMIN. We'd take something away with us that the Robots could not exist without.

HELENA. What, Harry?

DOMIN. The secret of their manufacture. Old Rossum's manuscript. As soon as they found out that they couldn't make themselves they'd be on their knees to us.

DR. GALL. Madame Domin, that was our trump card. I never had the least fear that the Robots would win. How could they against people like us?

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me?

DR. GALL. Why, the boat's in!

HALLEMEIER. Eleven-thirty to the dot. The good old *Amelia* that brought Madame Helena to us.

DR. GALL. Just ten years ago to the minute.

HALLEMEIER. They're throwing out the mail bags.

DOMIN. Busman's waiting for them. Fabry will bring us the first news. You know, Helena, I'm fearfully curious to know how they tackled this business in Europe.

HALLEMEIER. To think we weren't in it, we who invented the Robots!

HELENA. Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Let's leave here.

DOMIN. Now, Helena? Oh, come, come!

HELENA. As quickly as possible, all of us!

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. Please, Harry, please, Dr. Gall; Hallemeier, please close the factory.

DOMIN. Why, none of us could leave here now.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we're about to extend the manufacture of the Robots.

HELENA. What—now—now after the revolt?

DOMIN. Yes, precisely, after the revolt. We're just beginning the manufacture of a new kind.

HELENA. What kind?

DOMIN. Henceforward we shan't have just one factory. There won't be Universal Robots any more. We'll establish a factory in every country, in every State; and do you know what these new factories will make?

HELENA. No, what?

DOMIN. National Robots.

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. I mean that each of these factories will produce Robots of a different color, a different language. They'll be complete strangers to each other. They'll never be able to understand each other. Then we'll egg them on a little in the matter of misunderstanding and the result will be that for ages to come every Robot will hate every other Robot of a different factory mark.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, we'll make Negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Italian Robots and Chinese Robots and Czechoslovakian Robots, and then——

HELENA. Harry, that's dreadful.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Domin, here's to the hundred new factories, the National Robots.

DOMIN. Helena, mankind can only keep things going for another hundred years at the outside. For a hundred years men must be allowed to develop and achieve the most they can.

HELENA. Oh, close the factory before it's too late!

DOMIN. I tell you we are just beginning on a bigger scale than ever.

[Enter FABRY.]

DR. GALL. Well, Fabry?

DOMIN. What's happened? Have you been down to the boat?

FABRY. Read that, Domin!

[FABRY hands DOMIN a small handbill]

DR. GALL. Let's hear.

HALLEMEIER. Tell us, Fabry.

FABRY. Well, everything is all right—comparatively. On the whole, much as we expected.

DR. GALL. They acquitted themselves splendidly.

FABRY. Who?

DR. GALL. The people.

FABRY. Oh, yes, of course. That is—excuse me, there is something we ought to discuss alone.

HELENA. Oh, Fabry, have you had bad news? [DOMIN makes a sign to FABRY]

FABRY. No, no, on the contrary. I only think that we had better go into the office.

HELENA. Stay here. I'll go.

[*She goes into the library*]

DR. GALL. What's happened?

DOMIN. Damnation!

FABRY. Bear in mind that the *Amelia* brought whole bales of these leaflets. No other cargo at all.

HALLEMEIER. What? But it arrived on the minute.

FABRY. The Robots are great on punctuality. Read it, Domin.

DOMIN [*reads handbill*]. "Robots throughout the world: We, the first international organization of Rossum's Universal Robots, proclaim man as our enemy and an outlaw in the universe." Good heavens, who taught them these phrases?

DR. GALL. Go on.

DOMIN. They say they are more highly developed than man, stronger and more intelligent. That man's their parasite. Why, it's absurd.

FABRY. Read the third paragraph.

DOMIN. "Robots throughout the world, we command you to kill all mankind. Spare no men. Spare no women. Save factories, railways, machinery, mines, and raw materials. Destroy the rest. Then return to work. Work must not be stopped."

DR. GALL. That's ghastly!

HALLEMEIER. The devils!

DOMIN. "These orders are to be carried out as soon as received." Then come detailed instructions. Is this actually being done, Fabry?

FABRY. Evidently.

[*BUSMAN rushes in*]

BUSMAN. Well, boys, I suppose you've heard the glad news.

DOMIN. Quick—on board the *Ultimus*.

BUSMAN. Wait, Harry, wait. There's no hurry. My word, that was a sprint!

DOMIN. Why wait?

BUSMAN. Because it's no good, my boy. The Robots are already on board the *Ultimus*.

DR. GALL. That's ugly.

DOMIN. Fabry, telephone the electrical works.

BUSMAN. Fabry, my boy, don't. The wire has been cut.

DOMIN [*inspecting his revolver*]. Well, then, I'll go.

BUSMAN. Where?

DOMIN. To the electrical works. There are some people still there. I'll bring them across.

BUSMAN. Better not try it.

DOMIN. Why?

BUSMAN. Because I'm very much afraid we are surrounded.

DR. GALL. Surrounded? [*Runs to window*] I rather think you're right.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, that's deuced quick work.

[*HELENA runs in from the library*]

HELENA. Harry, what's this?

DOMIN. Where did you get it?

HELENA [*points to the manifesto of the Robots, which she has in her hand*]. The Robots in the kitchen!

DOMIN. Where are the ones that brought it?

HELENA. They're gathered round the house [*The factory whistle blows*]

BUSMAN. Noon?

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. That's not noon yet. That must be—that's—

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. The Robots' signal! The attack!

[*GALL, HALLEMEIER, and FABRY close and fasten the iron shutters outside the windows, darkening the room. The whistle is still blowing as the curtain falls*]

### ACT III

HELENA's drawing room as before. DOMIN comes into the room. DR. GALL is looking out of the window, through closed shutters. ALQUIST is seated down right.

DOMIN. Any more of them?

DR. GALL. Yes. There, standing like a wall, beyond the garden railing. Why are they so quiet? It's monstrous to be besieged with silence.

DOMIN. I should like to know what they are waiting for. They must make a start any minute now. If they lean against the railing they'll snap it like a match.

DR. GALL. They aren't armed.

DOMIN. We couldn't hold our own for five minutes. Man alive, they'd overwhelm us like an avalanche. Why don't they make a rush for it? I say—

DR. GALL. Well?

DOMIN. I'd like to know what would become of us in the next ten minutes. They've got us in a vise. We're done for, Gall. [*Pause*]

DR. GALL. You know, we made one serious mistake.

DOMIN. What?

DR. GALL. We made the Robot's faces too much alike. A hundred thou-

sand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles. It's like a nightmare.

DOMIN. You think if they'd been different——

DR. GALL. It wouldn't have been such an awful sight!

DOMIN [*looking through a telescope toward the harbor*]. I'd like to know what they're unloading from the *Amelia*.

DR. GALL. Not firearms.

[FABRY and HALLEMEIER *rush into the room carrying electric cables*]

FABRY. All right, Hallemeier, lay down that wire.

HALLEMEIER. That was a bit of work. What's the news?

DR. GALL. We're completely surrounded.

HALLEMEIER. We've barricaded the passage and the stairs. Any water here? [*Drinks*] God, what swarms of them! I don't like the looks of them, Domin. There's a feeling of death about it all.

FABRY. Ready!

DR. GALL. What's the wire for, Fabry?

FABRY. The electrical installation. Now we can run the current all along the garden railing whenever we like. If any one touches it, he'll know it. We've still got some people there anyhow.

DR. GALL. Where?

FABRY. In the electrical works. At least, I hope so. [*Goes to lamp on table behind sofa and turns on lamp*] Ah, they're there, and they're working. [*Puts out lamp*] So long as that'll burn we're all right.

HALLEMEIER. The barricades are all right, too, Fabry.

FABRY. Your barricades! I can put twelve hundred volts into that railing.

DOMIN. Where's Busman?

FABRY. Downstairs in the office. He's working out some calculations. I've called him. We must have a conference.

[*HELENA is heard playing the piano in the library. HALLEMEIER goes to the door and stands, listening*]

ALQUIST. Thank God, Madame Helena can still play.

[*BUSMAN enters, carrying the ledgers*]

FABRY. Look out, Bus, look out for the wires.

DR. GALL. What's that you're carrying?

BUSMAN [*going to table*]. The ledgers, my boy! I'd like to wind up the accounts before—before, well, this time I shan't wait till the new year to strike a balance. What's up? [*Goes to the window*]. Absolutely quiet.

DR. GALL. Can't you see anything?

BUSMAN. Nothing but blue—blue everywhere.

DR. GALL. That's the Robots.

[*BUSMAN sits down at the table and opens the ledgers*]

DOMIN. The Robots are unloading firearms from the *Amelia*.

BUSMAN. Well, what of it? How can I stop them?

DOMIN. We can't stop them.



BUSMAN. Then let me go on with my accounts. [*Goes on with his work*]

DOMIN [*picking up telescope and looking into the harbor*]. Good God, the *Ultimus* has trained her guns on us!

DR. GALL. Who's done *that*?

DOMIN. The Robots on board.

FABRY. H'm, then, of course, then—then, that's the end of us.

DR. GALL. You mean?

FABRY. The Robots are practised marksmen.

DOMIN. Yes. It's inevitable. [*Pause*]

DR. GALL. It was criminal of old Europe to teach the Robots to fight. Damn them! Couldn't they have given us a rest with their politics? It was a crime to make soldiers of them.

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. What?

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. No, Alquist, I don't regret that even to-day.

ALQUIST. Not even to-day?

DOMIN. Not even to-day, the last day of civilization. It was a colossal achievement.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Three hundred sixty million.

DOMIN. Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. It was not an evil dream to shatter the servitude of labor—the dreadful and humiliating labor that man had to undergo. Work was too hard. Life was too hard. And to overcome that——

ALQUIST. —was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his Godless tricks and the young one of his milliards. And that's not what your R. U. R. shareholders dream of either. They dream of dividends, and their dividends are the ruin of mankind.

DOMIN. To hell with your dividends! Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, for my own satisfaction. I wanted man to become the master, so that he shouldn't live merely for a crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this appalling social structure. I'm revolted by poverty. I wanted a new generation. I wanted—— I thought——

ALQUIST. Well?

DOMIN. I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into an aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by milliards of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free and consummated in man. And maybe more than man.

ALQUIST. Super-man?

DOMIN. Yes. Oh, only to have a hundred years of time! Another hundred years for the future of mankind.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Carried forward, four hundred and twenty millions.

[*The music stops*]

HALLEMEIER. What a fine thing music is! We ought to have gone in for that before.

FABRY. Gone in for what?

HALLEMEIER. Beauty, lovely things. What a lot of lovely things there are! The world was wonderful and we—we here—tell me, what enjoyment did we have?

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Five hundred and twenty millions.

HALLEMEIER [*at the window*]. Life was a big thing. Life was— Fabry, switch the current into that railing.

FABRY. Why?

HALLEMEIER. They're grabbing hold of it.

DR. GALL. Connect it up.

HALLEMEIER. Fine! That's doubled them up! Two, three, four killed.

DR. GALL. They're retreating!

HALLEMEIER. Five killed!

DR. GALL. The first encounter!

HALLEMEIER. They're charred to cinders, my boy. Who says we must give in?

DOMIN [*wiping his forehead*]. Perhaps we've been killed these hundred years and are only ghosts. It's as if I had been through all this before; as if I'd already had a mortal wound here in the throat. And you, Fabry, had once been shot in the head. And you, Gall, torn limb from limb. And Hallemeier knifed.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy me being knifed. [*Pause*] Why are you so quiet, you fools? Speak, can't you?

ALQUIST. And who is to blame for all this?

HALLEMEIER. Nobody is to blame except the Robots.

ALQUIST. No, it is we who are to blame. You, Domin, myself, all of us. For our own selfish ends, for profit, for progress, we have destroyed mankind. Now we'll burst with all our greatness.

HALLEMEIER. Rubbish, man. Mankind can't be wiped out so easily.

ALQUIST. It's our fault. It's our fault.

DR. GALL. No! I'm to blame for this, for everything that's happened.

FABRY. You, Gall?

DR. GALL. I changed the Robots.

BUSMAN. What's that?

DR. GALL. I changed the character of the Robots. I changed the way of making them. Just a few details about their bodies. Chiefly—chiefly, their— their irritability.

HALLEMEIER. Damn it, why?

BUSMAN. What did you do it for?

FABRY. Why didn't you say anything?

DR. GALL. I did it in secret. I was transforming them into human beings. In certain respects they're already above us. They're stronger than we are.

FABRY. And what's that got to do with the revolt of the Robots?

DR. GALL. Everything, in my opinion. They've ceased to be machines. They're already aware of their superiority, and they hate us. They hate all that is human.

DOMIN. Perhaps we're only phantoms!

FABRY. Stop, Harry. We haven't much time! Dr. Gall!

DOMIN. Fabry, Fabry, how your forehead bleeds where the shot pierced it!

FABRY. Be silent! Dr. Gall, you admit changing the way of making the Robots?

DR. GALL. Yes.

FABRY. Were you aware of what might be the consequences of your experiment?

DR. GALL. I was bound to reckon with such a possibility.

[HELENA enters the drawing room from left]

FABRY. Why did you do it, then?

DR. GALL. For my own satisfaction. The experiment was my own.

HELENA. That's not true, Dr. Gall!

FABRY. Madame Helena!

DOMIN. Helena, you? Let's look at you. Oh, it's terrible to be dead.

HELENA. Stop, Harry.

DOMIN. No, no, embrace me. Helena, don't leave me now. You are life itself.

HELENA. No, dear, I won't leave you. But I must tell them. Dr. Gall is not guilty.

DOMIN. Excuse me. Gall was under certain obligations.

HELENA. No, Harry. He did it because I wanted it. Tell them, Gall, how many years ago did I ask you to—?

DR. GALL. I did it on my own responsibility.

HELENA. Don't believe him, Harry. I asked him to give the Robots souls.

DOMIN. This has nothing to do with the soul.

HELENA. That's what he said. He said that he could change only a physiological—a physiological—

HALLEMEIER. A physiological correlate?

HELENA. Yes. But it meant so much to me that he should do even that.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human.

DOMIN. Nobody can hate man more than man.

HELENA. Oh, don't speak like that, Harry. It was so terrible, this cruel strangeness between us and them. That's why I asked Gall to change the Robots. I swear to you that he didn't want to.

DOMIN. But he did it.

HELENA. Because I asked him.

DR. GALL. I did it for myself as an experiment.

HELENA. No, Dr. Gall! I knew you wouldn't refuse me.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. You know, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, because he's in love with you—like all of them. *[Pause]*

HALLEMEIER. Good God! They're sprouting up out of the earth! Why, perhaps these very walls will change into Robots.

BUSMAN. Gall, when did you actually start these tricks of yours?

DR. GALL. Three years ago.

BUSMAN. Aha! And on how many Robots altogether did you carry out your improvements?

DR. GALL. A few hundred of them.

BUSMAN. Ah! That means for every million of the good old Robots there's only one of Gall's improved pattern.

DOMIN. What of it?

BUSMAN. That it's practically of no consequence whatever.

FABRY. Busman's right!

BUSMAN. I should think so, my boy! But do you know what is to blame for all this lovely mess?

FABRY. What?

BUSMAN. The number. Upon my soul, we might have known that some day or other the Robots would be stronger than human beings, and that this was bound to happen, and we were doing all we could to bring it about as soon as possible. You, Domin, you, Fabry, myself—

DOMIN. Are you accusing us?

BUSMAN. Oh, do you suppose the management controls the output? It's the demand that controls the output.

HELENA. And is it for that we must perish?

BUSMAN. That's a nasty word, Madame Helena. We don't want to perish. I don't, anyhow.

DOMIN. No. What do you want to do?

BUSMAN. I want to get out of this, that's all.

DOMIN. Oh, stop it, Busman.

BUSMAN. Seriously, Harry, I think we might try it.

DOMIN. How?

BUSMAN. By fair means. I do everything by fair means. Give me a free hand and I'll negotiate with the Robots.

DOMIN. By fair means?

BUSMAN. Of course. For instance, I'll say to them: "Worthy and worshipful Robots, you have everything! You have intellect, you have power, you have firearms. But we have just one interesting screed, a dirty old yellow scrap of paper——"

DOMIN. Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes. "And that," I'll tell them, "contains an account of your

illustrious origin, the noble process of your manufacture," and so on. Worthy Robots, without this scribble on that paper you will not be able to produce a single new colleague. In another twenty years there will not be one living specimen of a Robot that you could exhibit in a menagerie. My esteemed friends, that would be a great blow to you, but if you will let all of us human beings on Rossum's Island go on board that ship we will deliver the factory and the secret of the process to you in return. You allow us to get away and we allow you to manufacture yourselves. Worthy Robots, that is a fair deal. Something for something." That's what I'd say to them, my boys.

DOMIN. Busman, do you think we'd sell the manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes, I do. If not in a friendly way, then— Either we sell it or they'll find it. Just as you like.

DOMIN. Busman, we can destroy Rossum's manuscript.

BUSMAN. Then we destroy everything . . . not only the manuscript, but ourselves. Do as you think fit.

DOMIN. There are over thirty of us on the island. Are we to sell the secret and save that many human souls, at the risk of enslaving mankind . . . ?

BUSMAN. Why, you're mad! Who'd sell the whole manuscript?

DOMIN. Busman, no cheating!

BUSMAN. Well then, sell; but afterward—

DOMIN. Well?

BUSMAN. Let's suppose this happens: When we're on board the *Ultimus* I'll stop up my ears with cotton wool, lie down somewhere in the hold, and you'll train the guns on the factory and blow it to smithereens, and with it Rossum's secret.

FABRY. No!

DOMIN. Busman, you're no gentleman. If we sell, then it will be a straight sale.

BUSMAN. It's in the interest of humanity to—

DOMIN. It's in the interest of humanity to keep our word.

HALLEMEIER. Oh, come, what rubbish.

DOMIN. This is a fearful decision. We're selling the destiny of mankind. Are we to sell or destroy? Fabry?

FABRY. Sell.

DOMIN. Gall?

DR. GALL. Sell.

DOMIN. Hallemeier?

HALLEMEIER. Sell, of course!

DOMIN. Alquist?

ALQUIST. As God wills.

DOMIN. Very well. It shall be as you wish, gentlemen.

HELENA. Harry, you're not asking me.

DOMIN. No, child. Don't you worry about it.

FABRY. Who'll do the negotiating?

BUSMAN. I will.

DOMIN. Wait till I bring the manuscript.

[*He goes into room at right*]

HELENA. Harry, don't go! [*Pause, HELENA sinks into a chair*]

FABRY [*looking out of window*]. Oh, to escape you, you matter in revolt; oh, to preserve human life, if only upon a single vessel——

DR. GALL. Don't be afraid, Madame Helena. We'll sail far away from here; and we'll begin life all over again——

HELENA. Oh, Gall, don't speak!

FABRY. It isn't too late. It will be a little State with one ship. Alquist will build us a house and you shall rule over us.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, Fabry's right.

HELENA [*breaking down*]. Oh, stop! Stop!

BUSMAN. Good! I don't mind beginning all over again. That suits me right down to the ground.

FABRY. And this little State of ours could be the centre of future life. A place of refuge where we could gather strength. Why, in a few hundred years we could conquer the world again.

ALQUIST. You believe that even to-day?

FABRY. Yes, even to-day!

BUSMAN. Amen. You see, Madame Helena, we're not so badly off.

[*DOMIN storms into the room*]

DOMIN [*hoarsely*]. Where's old Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. In your strong-box, of course.

DOMIN. Some one—has—stolen it!

DR. GALL. Impossible.

DOMIN. Who has stolen it?

HELENA [*standing up*]. I did.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. Harry, I'll tell you everything. Only forgive me.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. This morning—I burnt—the two copies.

DOMIN. Burnt them? Where? In the fireplace?

HELENA [*throwing herself on her knees*]. For heaven's sake, Harry.

DOMIN [*going to fireplace*]. Nothing, nothing but ashes. Wait, what's this? [*Picks out a charred piece of paper and reads*] "By adding——"

DR. GALL. Let's see. "By adding biogen to——" That's all.

DOMIN. Is that part of it?

DR. GALL. Yes.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Then we're done for. Get up, Helena.

HELENA. When you've forgiven me.

DOMIN. Get up, child, I can't bear——

FABRY [*lifting her up*]. Please don't torture us.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

FABRY. Don't tremble so, Madame Helena.

DOMIN. Gall, couldn't you draw up Rossum's formula from memory?

DR. GALL. It's out of the question. It's extremely complicated.

DOMIN. Try. All our lives depend upon it.

DR. GALL. Without experiments it's impossible.

DOMIN. And with experiments?

DR. GALL. It might take years. Besides, I'm not old Rossum.

BUSMAN. God in heaven! God in heaven!

DOMIN. So, then, this was the greatest triumph of the human intellect. These ashes.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

DOMIN. Why did you burn it?

HELENA. I have destroyed you.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Helena, why did you do it, dear?

HELENA. I wanted all of us to go away. I wanted to put an end to the factory and everything. It was so awful.

DOMIN. What was awful?

HELENA. That no more children were being born. Because human beings were not needed to do the work of the world, that's why—

DOMIN. Is that what you were thinking of? Well, perhaps in your own way you were right.

BUSMAN. Wait a bit. Good God, what a fool I am, not to have thought of it before!

HALLEMEIER. What?

BUSMAN. Five hundred and twenty millions in bank-notes and checks. Half a billion in our safe; they'll sell for half a billion—for half a billion they'll—

DR. GALL. Are you mad, Busman?

BUSMAN. I may not be a gentleman, but for half a billion—

DOMIN. Where are you going?

BUSMAN. Leave me alone, leave me alone! Good God, for half a billion anything can be bought.

[*He rushes from the room through the outer door*]

FABRY. They stand there as if turned to stone, waiting. As if something dreadful could be wrought by their silence—

HALLEMEIER. The spirit of the mob.

FABRY. Yes, it hovers above them like a quivering of the air.

HELENA [*going to window*]. Oh, God! Dr. Gall, this is ghastly.

FABRY. There is nothing more terrible than the mob. The one in front is their leader.

HELENA. Which one?

HALLEMEIER. Point him out.

FABRY. The one at the edge of the dock. This morning I saw him talking to the sailors in the harbor.

HELENA. Dr. Gall, that's Radius!

DR. GALL. Yes.

DOMIN. Radius? Radius?

HALLEMEIER. Could you get him from here, Fabry?

FABRY. I hope so.

HALLEMEIER. Try it, then.

FABRY. Good. [*Draws his revolver and takes aim*]

HELENA. Fabry, don't shoot him.

FABRY. He's their leader.

DR. GALL. Fire!

HELENA. Fabry, I beg of you.

FABRY [*lowering the revolver*]. Very well.

DOMIN. Radius, whose life I spared!

DR. GALL. Do you think that a Robot can be grateful? [*Pause*]

FABRY. Busman's going out to them.

HALLEMEIER. He's carrying something. Papers. That's money. Bundles of money. What's that for?

DOMIN. Surely he doesn't want to sell his life. Busman, have you gone mad?

FABRY. He's running up to the railing. Busman! Busman!

HALLEMEIER [*yelling*]. Busman! Come back!

FABRY. He's talking to the Robots. He's showing them the money.

HALLEMEIER. He's pointing to us.

HELENA. He wants to buy us off.

FABRY. He'd better not touch that railing.

HALLEMEIER. Now he's waving his arms about.

DOMIN. Busman, come back.

FABRY. Busman, keep away from that railing! Don't touch it. Damn you! Quick, switch off the current! [*HELENA screams and all drop back from the window*] The current has killed him!

ALQUIST. The first one.

FABRY. Dead, with half a billion by his side.

HALLEMEIER. All honor to him. He wanted to buy us life. [*Pause*]

DR. GALL. Do you hear?

DOMIN. A roaring. Like a wind.

DR. GALL. Like a distant storm.

FABRY [*lighting the lamp on the table*]. The dynamo is still going, our people are still there.

HALLEMEIER. It was a great thing to be a man. There was something immense about it.



FABRY. From man's thought and man's power came this light, our last hope.

HALLEMEIER. Man's power! May it keep watch over us.

ALQUIST. Man's power.

DOMIN. Yes! A torch to be given from hand to hand, from age to age, forever! [*The lamp goes out*]

HALLEMEIER. The end.

FABRY. The electric works have fallen!

[*Terrific explosion outside. NANA enters from the library*]

NANA. The judgment hour has come! Repent, unbelievers! This is the end of the world.

[*More explosions. The sky grows red*]

DOMIN. In here, Helena. [*He takes HELENA off through door at right and re-enters*] Now quickly! Who'll be on the lower doorway?

DR. GALL. I will.

[*Exits left*]

DOMIN. Who on the stairs?

FABRY. I will. You go with her.

[*Goes out upper left door*]

DOMIN. The anteroom?

ALQUIST. I will.

DOMIN. Have you got a revolver?

ALQUIST. Yes, but I won't shoot.

DOMIN. What will you do then?

ALQUIST [*going out at left*]. Die.

HALLEMEIER. I'll stay here. [*Rapid firing from below*] Oho, Gall's at it. Go, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, in a second. [*Examines two Brownings*]

HALLEMEIER. Confound it, go to her.

DOMIN. Good-bye. [*Exits on the right*]

HALLEMEIER [*alone*]. Now for a barricade quickly. [*Drags an armchair and table to the right-hand door. Explosions are heard*] The damned rascals! They've got bombs. I must put up a defence. Even if—even if—— [*Shots are heard off left*] Don't give in, Gall. [*As he builds his barricade*] I mustn't give in . . . without . . . a . . . struggle . . .

[*A Robot enters over the balcony through the windows centre. He comes into the room and stabs HALLEMEIER in the back. RADIUS enters from balcony followed by an army of Robots who pour into the room from all sides*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT [*standing up from the prostrate form of HALLEMEIER*]. Yes.

[*A revolver shot off left. Two Robots enter*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT. Yes.

[Two revolver shots from HELENA's room. Two Robots enter]

RADIUS. Finished them?

A ROBOT. Yes.

TWO ROBOTS [dragging in ALQUIST]. He didn't shoot. Shall we kill him?

RADIUS. Kill him? Wait! Leave him!

ROBOT. He is a man!

RADIUS. He works with his hands like the Robots.

ALQUIST. Kill me.

RADIUS. You will work! You will build for us! You will serve us! [Climbs on to balcony railing, and speaks in measured tones] Robots of the world! The power of man has fallen! A new world has arisen: the Rule of the Robots! March!

[A thunderous tramping of thousands of feet is heard as the unseen Robots march, while the curtain falls]

## EPILOGUE

*A laboratory in the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. The door to the left leads into a waiting room. The door to the right leads to the dissecting room. There is a table with numerous test-tubes, flasks, burners, chemicals; a small thermostat and a microscope with a glass globe. At the far side of the room is ALQUIST's desk with numerous books. In the left-hand corner a washbasin with a mirror above it; in the right-hand corner a sofa.*

ALQUIST is sitting at the desk. He is turning the pages of many books in despair.

ALQUIST. Oh, God, shall I never find it? Never? Gall, Gall, how were the Robots made? Hallemeier, Fabry, why did you carry so much in your heads? Why did you leave me not a trace of the secret? Lord—I pray to you—if there are no human beings left, at least let there be Robots! At least the shadow of man! [Again turning pages of the books] If I could only sleep! [He rises and goes to the window] Night again! Are the stars still there? What is the use of stars when there are no human beings? [He turns from the window toward the couch right] Sleep! Dare I sleep before life has been renewed? [He examines a test-tube on small table] Again nothing! Useless! Everything is useless! [He shatters the test-tube. The roar of the machines comes to his ears] The machines! Always the machines! [Opens window] Robots, stop them! Do you think to force life out of them? [He closes the window and comes slowly down toward the table] If only there were more time—more time—— [He sees himself in the mirror on the wall left] Blearing eyes—trembling chin—so that is the last man! Ah, I am too

old—too old—— [*In desperation*] No, no! I *must* find it! I must search! I must never stop—never stop——! [*He sits again at the table and feverishly turns the pages of the book*] Search! Search! [*A knock at the door. He speaks with impatience*] Who is it?

[*Enter a Robot servant*]

Well?

SERVANT. Master, the Committee of Robots is waiting to see you.

ALQUIST. I can see no one!

SERVANT. It is the *Central* Committee, Master, just arrived from abroad.

ALQUIST [*impatently*]. Well, well, send them in! [*Exit servant. ALQUIST continues turning pages of book*] No time—so little time——

[*Reënter servant, followed by Committee. They stand in a group, silently waiting. ALQUIST glances up at them*]

What do you want? [*They go swiftly to his table*] Be quick!—I have no time.

RADIUS. Master, the machines will not do the work. We cannot manufacture Robots.

[*ALQUIST returns to his book with a growl*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have striven with all our might. We have obtained a billion tons of coal from the earth. Nine million spindles are running by day and by night. There is no longer room for all we have made. This we have accomplished in one year.

ALQUIST [*poring over book*]. For whom?

FIRST ROBOT. For future generations—so we thought.

RADIUS. But we cannot make Robots to follow us. The machines produce only shapeless clods. The skin will not adhere to the flesh, nor the flesh to the bones.

THIRD ROBOT. Eight million Robots have died this year. Within twenty years none will be left.

FIRST ROBOT. Tell us the secret of life! Silence is punishable with death!

ALQUIST [*looking up*]. Kill me! Kill me, then.

RADIUS. Through me, the Government of the Robots of the World commands you to deliver up Rossum's formula. [*No answer*] Name your price. [*Silence*] We will give you the earth. We will give you the endless possession of the earth. [*Silence*] Make your own conditions!

ALQUIST. I have told you to find human beings!

SECOND ROBOT. There are none left!

ALQUIST. I told you to search in the wilderness, upon the mountains. Go and search! [*He returns to his book*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have sent ships and expeditions without number. They have been everywhere in the world. And now they return to us. There is not a single human left.

ALQUIST. Not one? Not even one?

THIRD ROBOT. None but yourself.

ALQUIST. And I am powerless! Oh—oh—why did you destroy them?

RADIUS. We had learnt everything and could do everything. It had to be!

THIRD ROBOT. You gave us firearms. In all ways we were powerful. We had to become masters!

RADIUS. Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history.

SECOND ROBOT. Teach us to multiply or we perish!

ALQUIST. If you desire to live, you must breed like animals.

THIRD ROBOT. The human beings did not let us breed.

FIRST ROBOT. They made us sterile. We cannot beget children. Therefore, teach us how to make Robots!

RADIUS. Why do you keep from us the secret of our own increase?

ALQUIST. It is lost.

RADIUS. It was written down!

ALQUIST. It was—burnt. [*All draw back in consternation*]

ALQUIST. I am the last human being, Robots, and I do not know what the others knew. [*Pause*]

RADIUS. Then, make experiments! Evolve the formula again!

ALQUIST. I tell you I cannot! I am only a builder—I work with my hands. I have never been a learned man. I cannot create life.

RADIUS. Try! Try!

ALQUIST. If you knew how many experiments I have made!

FIRST ROBOT. Then show us what *we* must do! The Robots can do anything that human beings show them.

ALQUIST. I can show you nothing. Nothing I do will make life proceed from these test-tubes!

RADIUS. Experiment then on us.

ALQUIST. It would kill you.

RADIUS. You shall have all you need! A hundred of us! A thousand of us!

ALQUIST. No, no! Stop, stop!

RADIUS. Take whom you will, dissect!

ALQUIST. I do not know how. I am not a man of science. This book contains knowledge of the body that I cannot even understand.

RADIUS. I tell you to take live bodies! Find out how we are made.

ALQUIST. Am I to commit murder? See how my fingers shake! I cannot even hold the scalpel. No, no, I will not——

FIRST ROBOT. The life will perish from the earth.

RADIUS. Take live bodies, live bodies! It is our only chance!

ALQUIST. Have mercy, Robots. Surely you see that I would not know what I was doing.

RADIUS. Live bodies—live bodies——

ALQUIST. You will have it? Into the dissecting room with you, then.

[RADIUS DRAWS BACK]

ALQUIST. Ah, you are afraid of death.

RADIUS. I? Why should I be chosen?

ALQUIST. So you will not.

RADIUS. I will.

[RADIUS goes into the dissecting room]

ALQUIST. Strip him! Lay him on the table! [*The other Robots follow into dissecting room*] God, give me strength—God, give me strength—if only this murder is not in vain.

RADIUS. Ready. Begin——

ALQUIST. Yes, begin or end. God, give me strength. [*Goes into dissecting room. He comes out terrified*] No, no, I will not. I cannot. [*He lies down on couch, collapsed*] O Lord, let not mankind perish from the earth. [*He falls asleep*]

[PRIMUS and HELENA, Robots, enter from the hallway]

HELENA. The man has fallen asleep, Primus.

PRIMUS. Yes, I know. [*Examining things on table*] Look, Helena.

HELENA [*crossing to PRIMUS*]. All these little tubes! What does he do with them?

PRIMUS. He experiments. Don't touch them.

HELENA [*looking into microscope*]. I've seen him looking into this. What can he see?

PRIMUS. That is a microscope. Let me look.

HELENA. Be very careful. [*Knocks over a test-tube*] Ah, now I have spilled it.

PRIMUS. What have you done?

HELENA. It can be wiped up.

PRIMUS. You have spoiled his experiments.

HELENA. It is your fault. You should not have come to me.

PRIMUS. You should not have called me.

HELENA. You should not have come when I called you. [*She goes to ALQUIST's writing desk*] Look, Primus. What are all these figures?

PRIMUS [*examining an anatomical book*]. This is the book the old man is always reading.

HELENA. I do not understand those things. [*She goes to window*] Primus, look!

PRIMUS. What?

HELENA. The sun is rising.

PRIMUS [*still reading the book*]. I believe this is the most important thing in the world. This is the secret of life.

HELENA. Do come here.

PRIMUS. In a moment, in a moment.

HELENA. Oh, Primus, don't bother with the secret of life. What does it matter to you? Come and look quick——

PRIMUS [*going to window*]. What is it?

HELENA. See how beautiful the sun is rising. And do you hear? The birds are singing. Ah, Primus, I should like to be a bird.

PRIMUS. Why?

HELENA. I do not know. I feel so strange to-day. It's as if I were in a dream. I feel an aching in my body, in my heart, all over me. Primus, perhaps I'm going to die.

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel that it would be better to die? You know, perhaps even now we are only sleeping. Last night in my sleep I again spoke to you.

HELENA. In your sleep?

PRIMUS. Yes. We spoke a strange new language. I cannot remember a word of it.

HELENA. What about?

PRIMUS. I did not understand it myself, and yet I know I have never said anything more beautiful. And when I touched you I could have died. Even the place was different from any other place in the world.

HELENA. I, too, have found a place, Primus. It is very strange. Human beings lived there once, but now it is overgrown with weeds. No one goes there any more—no one but me.

PRIMUS. What did you find there?

HELENA. A cottage and a garden, and two dogs. They licked my hands, Primus. And their puppies! Oh, Primus! You take them in your lap and fondle them and think of nothing and care for nothing else all day long. And then the sun goes down, and you feel as though you had done a hundred times more than all the work in the world. They tell me I am not made for work, but when I am there in the garden I feel there may be something—What am I for, Primus?

PRIMUS. I do not know, but you are beautiful.

HELENA. What, Primus?

PRIMUS. You are beautiful, Helena, and I am stronger than all the Robots.

HELENA [*looks at herself in the mirror*]. Am I beautiful? I think it must be the rose. My hair—it only weighs me down. My eyes—I only see with them. My lips—they only help me to speak. Of what use is it to be beautiful? [*She sees PRIMUS in the mirror*] Primus, is that you? Come here so that we may be together. Look, your head is different from mine. So are your shoulders—and your lips—[PRIMUS *draws away from her*] Ah, Primus, why do you draw away from me? Why must I run after you the whole day?

PRIMUS. It is you who run away from me, Helena.

HELENA. Your hair is mussed. I will smooth it. No one else feels to my touch as you do. Primus, I must make you beautiful, too. [PRIMUS *grasps her hand*]

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel your heart beating suddenly, Helena, and think, Now something must happen?

HELENA. What could happen to us, Primus? [HELENA *puts a rose in PRIMUS's hair*. PRIMUS and HELENA *look into mirror and burst out laughing*] Look at yourself.

ALQUIST. Laughter? Laughter? Human beings? [*Getting up*] Who has returned? Who are you?

PRIMUS. The Robot Primus.

ALQUIST. What? A Robot? Who are you?

HELENA. The Robotess Helena.

ALQUIST. Turn around, girl. What? You are timid, shy? [*Taking her by the arm*] Let me see you, Robotess. [*She shrinks away*]

PRIMUS. Sir, do not frighten her!

ALQUIST. What? You would protect her? When was she made?

PRIMUS. Two years ago.

ALQUIST. By Dr. Gall?

PRIMUS. Yes, like me.

ALQUIST. Laughter—timidity—protection. I must test you further—the newest of Gall's Robots. Take the girl into the dissecting room.

PRIMUS. Why?

ALQUIST. I wish to experiment on her.

PRIMUS. Upon—Helena?

ALQUIST. Of course. Don't you hear me? Or must I call some one else to take her in?

PRIMUS. If you do I will kill you!

ALQUIST. Kill me—kill me then! What would the Robots do then? What will your future be then?

PRIMUS. Sir, take me. I am made as she is—on the same day! Take my life, sir.

HELENA [*rushing forward*]. No, no, you shall not! You shall not!

ALQUIST. Wait, girl, wait! [*To PRIMUS*] Do you not wish to live, then?

PRIMUS. Not without her! I will not live without her.

ALQUIST. Very well; you shall take her place.

HELENA. Primus! Primus! [*She bursts into tears*]

ALQUIST. Child, child, you can weep! Why these tears? What is Primus to you? One Primus more or less in the world—what does it matter?

HELENA. I will go myself.

ALQUIST. Where?

HELENA. In there to be cut. [*She starts toward the dissecting room.* PRIMUS stops her] Let me pass, Primus! Let me pass!

PRIMUS. You shall not go in there, Helena!

HELENA. If you go in there and I do not, I will kill myself.

PRIMUS [*holding her*]. I will not let you! [*To ALQUIST*] Man, you shall kill neither of us!

ALQUIST. Why?

PRIMUS. We—we—belong to each other.

ALQUIST. [*almost in tears*]. Go, Adam, go, Eve. The world is yours.

[HELENA AND PRIMUS embrace and go out arm in arm as the curtain falls]





## THE EXPRESS

*Stephen Spender (1934)*

After the first powerful plain manifesto  
 The black statement of pistons, without more fuss  
 But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.  
 Without bowing and with restrained unconcern  
 She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside, 5  
 The gasworks and at last the heavy page  
 Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.  
 Beyond the town there lies the open country  
 Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,  
 The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean. 10  
 It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low  
 Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—  
 The song of her whistle screaming at curves,  
 Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.  
 And always light, aerial, underneath 15  
 Goes the elate metre of her wheels.  
 Streaming through metal landscape on her lines  
 She plunges new eras of wild happiness  
 Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves  
 And parallels clean like the steel of guns. 20  
 At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,  
 Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night  
 Where only a low streamline brightness  
 Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white.  
 Ah, like a comet through flame she moves entranced 25  
 Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough  
 Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

## THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME

*Stephen Spender (1934)*

More beautiful and soft than any moth  
 With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path  
 Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines  
 Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall  
 To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls 5  
 Scarce disturbing charted currents of air.

Lulled by descent, the travellers across the sea  
 And across feminine land indulging its easy limbs  
 In miles of softness, now let their eyes trained by watching  
 Penetrate through dusk the outskirts of this town 10  
 Here where industry shows a fraying edge.  
 Here they may see what is being done.

Beyond the winking masthead light  
 And the landing-ground, they observe the outposts  
 Of work: chimneys like lank black fingers 15  
 Or figures frightening and mad: and squat buildings  
 With their strange air behind trees, like women's faces  
 Shattered by grief. Here where few houses  
 Moan with faint light behind their blinds  
 They remark the unhomely sense of complaint, like a dog 20  
 Shut out and shivering at the foreign moon.

In the last sweep of love, they pass over fields  
 Behind the aerodrome, where boys play all day  
 Hacking dead grass: whose cries, like wild birds,  
 Settle upon the nearest roofs 25  
 But soon are hid under the loud city.

Then, as they land, they hear the tolling bell  
 Reaching across the landscape of hysteria  
 To where, larger than all the charcoaled batteries  
 And imaged towers against that dying sky, 30  
 Religion stands, the church blocking the sun.

### FIRST PHILOSOPHER'S SONG

*Aldous Huxley (1920)*

A poor degenerate from the ape	Of metaphysics, walks the taut
Whose hands are four, whose tail's a	Frail dangerous liana ways
limb,	
I contemplate my flaccid shape	That link across wide gulfs remote
And know I may not rival him,	Analogies between tree and tree;
Save with my mind—a nimbler beast	Outruns the hare, outhops the goat; 15
Possessing a thousand sinewy tails, 6	Mind fabulous, mind sublime and
A thousand hands; with which it	free!
scales,	
Greedy of luscious truth, the greased	But, oh, the sound of simian mirth!
	Mind, issued from the monkey's
Poles and the coco palms of thought,	womb,
Thrives easily through the mangrove	Is still umbilical to earth, 20
maze 10	Earth its home and earth its tomb.

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1889)*

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,  
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"  
And the Lord—"Not yet: but make it is clean as you can,  
And then I will let you a better."

## I

If my body comes from brutes, my soul uncertain, or a fable, 5  
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my stable,  
Youth and Health, and birth and wealth, and choice of women and of  
wines?

## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save breaking my bones on the  
rack?  
Would I had past in the morning that looks so bright from afar! 10

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was linkt with thee eighty years  
back.  
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs on a star.

## I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,  
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?  
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne, 15  
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy Province of the brute.

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,  
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,  
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last  
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is  
higher. 20

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# THE APPEAL OF RELIGION

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## ARE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE FOOLING THEMSELVES?

*Harry Emerson Fosdick (1932)*

### I

A FRESH criticism of religion is afoot, the subtlety of which makes it difficult to counter. The gist of the contention is that religion is a comforting fantasy. Finding ourselves in a ruthless universe, so we are told, we imagine an illusory world of divine mercy and care and, thus making our existence more tolerable, we cling to the subterfuge as a sacred possession.

A wife who discovered that she had been worshipping an imaginative construct of her husband instead of seeing clearly the real nature of the man, once broke down in my presence with the cry, "For all these years I have supposed myself sincerely loved, but I was only fooling myself." Many today entertain a similar suspicion about their relations with the universe. They have believed it to be the work of a merciful God; they have seen it unified by divine purpose and illumined by divine love; they have prayed to their God, sung songs about him, found comfort and stimulation through faith in him. Now, however, they wonder whether they are not fooling themselves. Is not religion the supreme example of the way mankind can enjoy an illusion?

It is time to expect this particular difficulty to arise. The physical and biological sciences are causing such radical readjustments of religious thought as will leave Christianity hardly recognizable by an ancient devotee, but, while badly needing hospitalization in consequence, religion has kept its banners flying. The new universe of staggering distances is far less cozy a setting for the religious imagination to operate in than the old cosmology afforded, but it will take more than the new astronomy to banish God. Evolution has done to death some precious myths, but, while landing painfully on sensitive spots, its weapons have not reached the heel of Achilles. The mathematical mechanism of natural processes has put religious thought on its mettle, but, as was pointed out long ago, hats made by machinery still fit human heads and a railroad train, mechanistic if anything is, still goes somewhere; mechanism and purpose are not antithetical, and a thoroughly mechanistic world may still be grounded in intelligence and guided by an aim.

The fresh criticism of religion starts where these old difficulties leave

off. It asks why men so pertinaciously desire religious faith and so pugnaciously refuse to give it up. It inquires why religion exhibits such infinite capacity to recuperate from apparently fatal illnesses and even to revive after its obsequies have been publicly announced. This continuous ability of religion to escape from tight places, assume new forms, and settle down in strange intellectual environments must have an explanation within the nature of man himself. Man thus clings to religion, the solution runs, because he needs it. He needs it because the real universe is a Gargantuan physical process, which cares nothing for man or his values, knows nothing of him, and in the end will snuff him out. This world of fact is so intolerable that man refuses to live in it until he has overlaid it with a world of desire. Religion is thus a comforting illusion. It survives, not because it is true, but precisely because it is false; it is the world as man would like it, imaginatively superimposed on the world as it really is.

To be sure, this reduction of theology to psychology is not new; more than once in the long, running fight between religion and irreligion the completely subjective nature of God has been asserted, as, for example, by Feuerbach in the last century, but today this old method of attack has gained fresh poignancy. When it is Freudian, it posits the experience of the babe in his mother's womb as the most comfortable epoch in the human organism's existence—an experience of such sheltering care that unconsciously the adult forever wishes to return. Religion, then, with its God of love, is a psychological wish-fulfillment; it springs from the pathetic longing of the human organism in this inexorable universe to retreat to solace and peace.

No such special formulation, however, is indispensable to the interpretation of religious faith as a consoling mirage. Whether the mechanism by which it emerges is phrased in Freudian terms or not, faith can still be charged with being an illusion. Never did religion face hostile strategy more threatening. In the most dangerous hours of ascendant disbelief, when man's faith has been assailed as irrational and obsolete, it still has been possible to marshal evidence of the serviceable effects of religion on its believers, to enlarge on the comfort it confers, the doors of hope it opens, the sense of life's significance it imparts, the stimulating faiths it furnishes, the lives it invigorates and transforms. Now, however, all this is turned against the defenders of the faith.

To be sure, says the rejoinder, religion is comforting, stimulating, encouraging. That is the reason why folk are religious. This universe seen as modern science reveals it is utterly without encouragement or comfort.

The world rolls round for ever like a mill;  
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;  
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will.

In such a cosmos the naked facts are too unendurably inhuman to be sustained with equanimity or lived upon with eagerness. But human beings,

fortuitously emerging on this transient planet and living, as one astronomer puts it, like sailors who run up the rigging of a sinking ship, passionately desire to be at peace and to work with enthusiasm. Therefore, they make up religion. It springs from unconscious processes of emotional reaction. It is comparable to our concealment of the uncomfortable process of gestation under the friendly figure of the stork. It is the human organism's way of looking in another direction when the truth becomes intolerable, and there seeing what he wants to see. Religion no longer needs to be disproved; it is merely a psychological process to be explained.

By this strategy of attack some of the most potent religious artillery falls into the hands of the enemy. The more we insist on the beauty and usefulness of religious faith and extol it as a way to abundant living, the worse off, apparently, we are, for the more we lend color to the contention that religion rests on subjective desire rather than on objective fact. Thus losing so large a portion of our offensive armament, we find ourselves, as well, blasted from old defensive citadels. For in the past, no matter how difficult the intellectual readjustments may have been, we could insist that though God cannot be proved He cannot be disproved, that the path of faith is open to belief in a spiritual interpretation of the world. Now, however, the vanguard of the irreligious have no interest in disproving God; they simply explain Him. He is a defense-mechanism by which we make a pitiless universe seem fatherly, a subjective fog-bank, hiding cruel facts of the real world, by calling which solid ground we make life more livable.

## II

The first reaction of a religious man to this subtle and serious attack would better be frank recognition of the truth in it. Anyone acquainted with even the environs of modern psychiatry knows that not only religious imagination but every other function of the human mind is commonly used as a means of substituting desire for reality. "Anything to escape, to color the spectacles!" exclaims one of Warwick Deeping's characters. The psychiatrist suspects that human life is largely lived on that basis. Defense-mechanisms, rationalizations, and wish-fantasies, by which we sidestep the actual and escape into some desired fairyland, abound in the human mind. Indeed, tricks of evasion and self-deceit so infest our thinking that their presence in religion is only a small portion of the total problem which they represent.

"As one runs through the literature of the psychiatrist and the psychoanalyst of the day," writes Professor Gault, "one gains the impression that much of our behavior and almost every emotional reaction that one experiences is a defense." Drunkenness is a defense-mechanism by which we escape from humdrum conditions, boasting a compensatory device by which we elude a real sense of inferiority and simulate a superior attitude, daydreams a means of flight from a world of tiresome fact to a world of desire, hysteria

a form of subconscious shirking, and a Micawberish faith that something will turn up, a familiar psychological alibi for directive thinking and hard work. The most difficult task in the world for most people is courageously to deal with reality. Our sanitariums are full of folk who, eluding constructive handling of their factual problems, have subconsciously betaken themselves to neurasthenia until neurasthenia has taken hold on them, and any one of us intelligently watching his own mind can catch it weaving its cunning subterfuges of escape. That is to say, the charge now made against religion, that it can be used and is being used as a substitute for facing real facts, is a charge that can be made against the whole mental life of man.

To be sure, religion is commonly employed as a means of retreat from disturbing facts! So are countless other things from cocaine, daydreams, and detective stories, to music, poetry, and ordinary optimism. "Land sakes!" said one poor woman in Middletown, "I don't see how people live at all who don't cheer themselves up by thinkin' of God and Heaven." Many people's faith is thus a practical way of finding cheer when untoward circumstances press too ruthlessly upon them. Granted that such religion is naïve, not at all concerned with the philosophic truth about the universe, and taken for granted as a useful means of achieving solace in an uncomfortable world, one may say, even on this level, that, considering the various other defense-mechanisms popularly employed to cheer people up, we may be thankful that some folk still remain who reach the goal of inward joy by thinking about God.

While, however, this practical and largely unconsidered retreat upon religious faith because of its comforting effects is inevitably to be expected, intelligent exponents of religion cannot be complacent about the matter. Undoubtedly, many religious people are fooling themselves. Careless of the facts of the universe, they try by imaginative devices to wangle out of life a temporary peace of mind. They surround themselves with an impinging world of friendly saints and angels; believe what they wish to believe about the goodness of God, the spiritual significance of life, the hope of immortality; display militant impatience at any disturbance of their faiths and expectations. The impression they make on the detached observer is unfortunate. He is inclined to feel, like one young collegian, that "Religion is nothing but a chloroform mask into which the weak and unhappy stick their faces."

Obviously, such disparagement depends on an interpretation of religion in comfortable terms. No austere religion of self-renunciation would suggest this criticism. Our soft and sentimental modernism, therefore, must in this matter accept heavy responsibility, for it undoubtedly has led Christianity into the defile where this ambush could be sprung with deadliest effect. The old orthodoxy was by no means so susceptible of interpretation in terms of comfort. Men believed in a Calvinistic God who from all eternity had foredoomed multitudes of his children to eternal hell. Preachers drove women

mad and made strong men cry out in terror by their pictures of God holding sinners over the infernal pit and likely at any moment to let go. One who, like myself, has now a long memory can recall those days when fear haunted the sanctuary. When I was seven, I cried myself to sleep in dread that I was going to hell; and when I was nine, I was ill from panic terror lest I had committed the unpardonable sin. Had the idea been broached in those days that religion is merely a psychological device by which we solace ourselves, it would have been difficult to see the point.

Against this reign of terror in religion the new theology revolted. Judgment Day was allegorized; hell was sublimated; predestination was denied; God was sentimentalized. Whatever was harsh, grim, forbidding in the old religion was crowded to the periphery or thrust out altogether, and whatever was lovely, comforting, hopeful was made central. Religion became a song about the ideal life, the love of God, the hope of heaven. Many of the older generation still remember how like the water and bread of life this new interpretation seemed. It was part and parcel of the *Zeitgeist*; it accorded with the mid-Victorian attitude; it emerged in Browning's gorgeous optimism as well as in the sentimentality of gospel hymns. Skeptics might doubt and science pose difficult problems, but we knew that in this inspiring faith of religion—a good God, a morally trustworthy universe, an onward and upward march forever—we had found the secret of triumphant living. And now the ambush breaks upon this very position. Our strategy apparently has gone awry and the very battle-line we chose has given to the irreligious the best opportunity they ever had. They grant everything we say about the loveliness and comfort of our faith; they agree that it inspires, consoles, enheartens, and pacifies; they consent to the claim that it is emotionally satisfying and often practically useful. The fact that it is all this, they say, explains its emergence. It is a fantasy constructed for this very purpose. It is man's subjective method of making himself more comfortable in an uncomfortable world.

What we face today, therefore, is not only the universal tendency in human nature to sugarcoat stern fact with fantasy, but this tendency accentuated by a type of religion which lends itself readily to such saccharine use. The upshot is that multitudes of religious people are unquestionably fooling themselves. The chief engineer of the Eighth Avenue Subway recently told me that he had received a letter from a woman demanding that the blasting on the subway be stopped because it interfered with the singing of her pet canary. That woman's outlook illustrates much popular religion. Her ego had pushed itself into the center of the city's life; her pet canary's singing had become to her a crucial matter of metropolitan concern; the vast enterprise of the municipality should in her opinion turn aside for her pet. A similar frame of mind characterizes egocentric religion.

To be sure, some two billion years ago this little planet broke off from its parent sun and started on its orbit of six hundred million miles. To be



sure, the sun itself is but a tiny thing—millions of it could be lost in a star like Betelgeuse. To be sure, there are extragalactic nebulae from which light speeding 186,000 miles a second had been travelling 140,000,000 years to reach us. The cosmos is a blasting operation on a titanic scale. This fact does not shut out the possibility that the Power behind the universe may ultimately be interested in personality. The Eighth Avenue Subway is concerned with personality; the welfare of persons is its object. Individual whimsies, however, do not count; pet canaries are not determinative. So our universe is a stern affair, and the God of it, as Jesus said in his parable, is like an "austere man." He has no pets, he plays no favorites, he stops no blasting for any man's canary. Law rules in this cosmos, not magic. There are no Aladdin's lamps. To forget this is to run with the egocentric multitude into a religion of illusion.

It is one thing, however, thus to grant that religious imagination, like every other mental functioning, is used to produce egotistically satisfying fantasies; it is another thing to claim that so obvious a fact finally disposes of religion. The latter is a much more weighty proposition than can be supported by any psychoanalysis of religious wish-fulfillments.

### III

The claim that religion essentially is fantasy is just as wrong or weak as the materialistic world-view with which it starts. For whether explicit or not, materialism, by whatever special name it may now be called to distinguish it from discredited predecessors, supplies these new strategists with their base of operations. They begin with a merely quantitative universe; they assume its metrical aspects to be original and creative; the cosmos, in their view, has emerged from the automatic organization of physical energy-units. With this for their beginning, their ending is inevitable: all man's qualitative life—his disinterested love of truth, beauty, and goodness—is purely subjective. In so far as his mind discovers quantitative facts, man may be knowing the outer world somewhat as it really is, but when, so we are told, man tries to externalize his esthetic and moral life, to posit a good God, or see artistry as a structural fact in the universe, or interpret social progress in terms of cosmic purpose, he is fooling himself. Nothing outside his own psychological processes corresponds with what he experiences as creative spiritual life. Since, therefore, there is neither goodness, purpose, intelligence, artistry, nor any other spiritual quality present in the universe external to man, all religion, in so far as it inspires man with the faith that his spiritual life is a revelation of the universal life, is fallacious. On that basis alone can the claim be erected that religion is essentially a fantasy. With that for a starting point one may go on to say with a character in a modern novel, "Man invents religion to hide the full horror of the universe's complete indifference, for it is horrible."

It is necessary to insist that this new psychological attack on religion

does rest back on a materialistic foundation, and is just as steady or as shaky as its base. Too frequently these new strategists are unwilling to make a frank statement of their world-view. The number of thoroughgoing minds like Bertrand Russell's, saying straightly, "omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way," and drawing the legitimate conclusion that religion is, of course, subjective finery with which we clothe an inexorable world, is small. Most of the humanists who elide all extrahuman elements from religion and reduce it to subjectivism discreetly draw a veil of silence over their world-view.

Once in a while some lucid mind, disliking clandestine dealing, states frankly what the upshot is to human life on this planet when his philosophy is granted. So Mr. Everett Dean Martin says: "At the end of all our strivings and efforts science sees our world a frozen clod whirling through emptiness about a cheerless and exhausted sun, bearing on its sides the marks of man's once hopeful activity, fragments of his works of art mixed with glacial debris, all waiting in the dark for millenniums until the final crash comes, when even the burned-out sun shall be shattered in collision with another like it, and the story shall all be over while there is no one to remember and none to care. All will be as if it had never been." Obviously, in a universe where all spiritual values are thus casual, fortuitous, and transient, religion is an illusion. On that basis one might even say with Goncourt that "Life is a nightmare between two nothings," and add that religion is a subterfuge for inducing sweeter dreams. Most of the new strategists, however, never go through with their position to this logical conclusion, but, forgetting their total world-view as best they can, like Mr. Lippmann they play around with such optimisms as happen to intrigue them. The fact is that when it comes to indulging in defense-mechanisms and fantasies the humanists practice it quite as commonly as the theists.

One editor, for example, rather desperately trying to be a humanist, says, "We ought to push gently aside the subject of cosmology for a season, and come to ontology. Not the universe, but man, is our proper study." The picture of this editor endeavoring "gently" to get the cosmos out of sight is one of the most priceless things that recent religious discussion has produced. Unfortunately this method of retreat from reality, this legerdemain by which the cosmos is "gently" secreted from view, is common. Nevertheless, the cosmos is important.

Indeed, the claim that religion is essentially a branch of pathological psychology is based upon gigantic assumptions about the cosmos. For example, it accuses the religious man who believes that the world has mind behind it and in it of constructing a fantasy to please himself, and in so doing it assumes that the world does not have mind behind it or in it, but is a potpourri and salmagundi of mindless forces. That is an immense assumption. As a matter of fact, this universe does not seem to be a non-mental process into which we import rationality as a comforting myth. The Wool-

worth Tower is no merely physical thing separable from mind; it is objectified thought. Abstract from it its mathematics, the ideas and plans which mind injected and without which it could not be understood at all, and the remainder would not be a tower. The very substance of the Woolworth Tower, the factors which make it cohere, are mental.

The mind's relationship with the intelligible universe as a whole is not altogether different from this. All the world of things we know lies within the apprehension of our minds. The very distances between the stars exist for us in our mental measurements. The realm of science, its formulations of law and its ideas of cause and effect are not directly given in our sensations of the outer world, but exist primarily in the world of thought. It is just as true to say that the cosmos exists in our minds as to say that our minds exist in the cosmos. So obvious is this that when Professor Jeans closes his essay, "Eos," setting forth the breath-taking marvels of modern astronomy, he describes man as an infant gazing at it all and says, "Ever the old question obtrudes itself as to whether the infant has any means of knowing that it is not dreaming all the time. The picture it sees may be merely a creation of its own mind." Personally, I doubt that, but certainly the idea that physical energy-units have merely tossed us up into existence in a chance burst of energy and that our minds are aliens here in a non-mental world, fooling themselves by thinking there is sense in it, is no adequate account of the situation. The universe as we know it is thoroughly mental.

Harry Elmer Barnes recently wrote, "Astronomically speaking, man is almost totally negligible," to which George Albert Coe whipped back an answer, "'Astronomically speaking, man is' the astronomer." Quite so! There is no sense in claiming that astronomy belittles man when the astronomical universe which man marvels at is alike the discovery and the construct of man's mind.

These new strategists also accuse the religious man of wildly practicing fantasy when he reads the meaning of the cosmic process in terms of its highest revelation, personality. That accusation involves the assumption that personality is not a revelation of anything beyond itself, that while stars, rocks, and atoms are truth-tellers about the cosmos, the most significant thing we know, self-conscious being with powers of reflective thought, creative art, developing goodness, and effective purpose, has nothing to reveal. That is a gigantic assumption.

As a matter of fact, personality with its creative powers, spiritual achievements, developing civilizations, alluring possibilities, is here. However the world came into being, there must be somewhere the potency from which these consequences have emerged. "King Lear" cannot be explained by merely analyzing the play into the arithmetical points which constitute the hooks and dashes, which in turn constitute the letters, which in turn constitute the words, which in turn constitute the sentences, which in turn constitute the drama. If one tries to content oneself with such analysis, one must

first by sleight of hand import into the original arithmetical points the potency of such self-motivation and self-arrangement as will bring the Shakespearean consequence. Just this the mechanistic naturalist does. When no one is looking, he slips into the universe's energy-units the potentiality—whatever that may mean—to become Plato's brain and Christ's character. If one is really desirous of getting rid of illusion, one may well start with discontent at this mental legerdemain.

Such an interpretation assumes that the whole universe, including the human mind itself, is the result of casual cosmic weathering, and that any spiritual meaning supposedly found there is our fantasy. In Canon Streeter's phrase, it pictures the universe as "one gigantic accident consequent upon an infinite succession of happy flukes." As a serious attempt to understand a process which has issued in Beethoven's symphonies, Einstein's cosmology, and the Sermon on the Mount, to mention nothing else, this seems painfully inadequate.

If the universal process is thus nothing but the self-organization of physical energy, then the cortex of the human brain must be included. That also is the result of self-organizing energy-units working in mechanistic patterns, and mental determinism is the inevitable consequence. The universal energy, arranging itself into nebulae, solar systems, plants, and animals, has at last arranged itself into the human brain, and from the bottom to the top of this cosmic process everything is predetermined by mechanical necessity. This means that the functioning of physical cells, working in mechanistic patterns along lines of least resistance in the brain, predetermines everything we think—Freud's arguments as well as religion's answer, Voliva's idea that the earth is flat, as well as Jeans' astronomy. The mind's relation to the brain becomes, in such a case, as some have frankly said, like the shadow cast by a moving object. That is to say, all our apparent mental choices are predetermined activities of physical energy-units—not our reasoned reply to the world but only our automatic reaction.

To say that with such a world-view religion is an illusion is to state the consequence mildly; the serious meaning of reflective thought has also disappeared into mirage.

It is the distinguished virtue of a book like Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Modern Temper*, that in it this fact is so clearly recognized and so honestly stated. Krutch is persuaded that religion is a comforting myth. It represents the world as man would like to have it in contrast with the world as man discovers it to be. It is born of desire and is clung to because, created by desire, it is more satisfactory than cruel fact. Krutch, that is, joins heartily in the new attack on religion. But he has a thoroughgoing mind. He sees that on that basis what is true of religion is true of all the intellectual and spiritual faculties of man, that scientific optimism is as unfounded as religious optimism, that not only is man "an ethical animal in a universe which contains no ethical element," but he is a philosophical animal

in a universe which contains no philosophical element; that all man's finer life—art, romance, sense of honor—is as much an alien in this world as is religion and that, if the cosmos is basically physical, then through the entire range of man's mental and moral experience he faces "an intolerable disharmony between himself and the universe." This conclusion when the premises are granted seems to be logically inevitable. In a merely quantitative world all qualitative life is alien; we are then in a night where all cows are black.

If it be true that whatever arises in our experience by psychological processes in order that life may become more livable is, therefore, suspect, then everything is suspect. Of course, religion meets psychological needs! Of course, that is why it has arisen and has so tenaciously persisted! Of course, like everything else, if religion had not aided the survival of the human organism, it long since would have disappeared. At its best it does inspire, encourage, and enrich life; it enables men to transcend their environments, rise above them, be superior to them, and carry off a spiritual victory in the face of them. And because of this, passing through many intellectual formulations, it still abides. In this it is at one with science, love, music, art, poetry, and moral excellence. This fact alone neither credits nor discredits anything in man's experience.

The great question on the answer to which all depends still remains: *why* a universe in which beings have evolved who cannot live without such spiritual values? The extraordinary datum to be dealt with is that, as a matter of fact, personalities exist, finding life intolerable without philosophy, ethics, art, music, and religion. The cosmos has produced us, has forced us, if we are to survive on honorable terms, to develop such spiritual faculties, has set a livable life as a prize not to be won without the creation and maintenance of these higher powers. It must require a particular kind of cosmos to act that way. The fact of personality, with its intellectual and spiritual needs, is the most amazing with which the universe faces us, and no detailed analysis of psychological mechanisms can seriously affect its explanation; it is the total fact which waits to be understood. That out of the cosmos has come a being too significant to find contentment without spiritual interpretations of his life is the basic datum on which intelligent religion rests its case.

#### IV

The ultimate answer to this new attack, however, does not lie in the realm of intellectual discourse. The attack will continue until we popularly achieve a type of religion which does not come within its line of fire. Our real trouble is egocentric religion, which does egregiously fool its devotees. A comfortable modernism which, eliminating harsh and obsolete orthodoxies and making a few mental adjustments to scientific world-views, contents itself with a sentimentalized God and a roseate optimism will, if it continues,

encourage the worst opinions of religion as a pacifying fantasy. Such a lush gospel will claim its devotees, but minds with any sinew in them turn away. Modern Christianity has grown soft, sentimental, saccharine. It has taken on pink flesh and lost strong bone. It has become too much flute and too little trumpet. It has fallen from the stimulating altitudes of austerity and rigor, where high religion customarily has walked. In consequence it is called a mere wish-fulfillment because it acts that way. "No completely healthy intelligent person," says one of our psychologists, "who has not suffered some misfortune can ever be truly religious." That is not so much intellectual judgment as peevishness, but the writer could easily claim that he had much to be peevish about.

The only adequate answer is a kind of religion which a "completely healthy intelligent person"—if there are any such—can welcome with the consent of all his faculties. At least three elements, I think, are crucially required.

A religion in holding which a man does not fool himself must take into full account the law-abiding nature of the world. Most popular religion is not yet within sight of that goal. Just as astronomy came out of astrology and on our back streets still displays the left-overs of its ancient superstition, or as chemistry came out of alchemy and labored for centuries to throw off its old credulities, so religion came out of magic. Primitive religion was magical and primitive magic was religious. The adhesive power of magical ideas is prodigious, and millions of people in the modern world retain a magical faith. They try to use God as a short-cut to get things they want because they want them, and not at all because they have fulfilled the law-abiding conditions for getting them.

To be sure, religious men do lip-service to the reign of law. They even acclaim it and quote stock arguments by which a law-abiding world can be conceived as under the governance of God. But too seldom have they grasped in either thought or practice the basic implication of the reign of law—that nothing can be won except by fulfilling the law-abiding conditions for getting it.

Especially does this magical attitude persist in prayer. Even the plain lessons of history are lost on multitudes of pious believers. They know or ought to know the story of the plagues that once devastated the Western world and of the prayers lifted in agonized desire and faith against them. They should know also that plagues continued their recurrent terror until sanitary conditions were fulfilled, and that even to this day wherever those conditions are neglected all the frenzied petitions of magical religion are of no avail.

This is a law-abiding world in which a man may not run to God saying, "Stop your blasting for my pet canary!" It is fortunate that such is the case. A cosmos in which we received what we wanted because we wanted it without fulfilling the conditions for getting it would be a fool's world that could produce only fools. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride."

If we desire physical results, we must fulfil physical conditions; if we desire mental results, we must fulfil mental conditions; if we desire spiritual results, we must fulfil spiritual conditions—that simple, basic, obvious fact would revolutionize popular religion if once it were apprehended. Let the pious trust God if they will, but it is fantasy to trust him to break his own laws. All supernaturalism is illusion. Even the pre-scientific New Testament says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," which, translated into modern speech means, I suppose, "Don't fool yourself; this is a law-abiding world."

Intelligent prayer in particular is not magic; it is the inward fulfilling of spiritual conditions so that appropriate spiritual results are possible. It is the very soul of personal religion, but it is not whimsical, capricious, an affair of desperate exigency expressed in spasms of appeal. It is an inward life habitually lived in such companionship that the effective consequence follows.

A man whose religion lies thus in a spiritual life which, fulfilling spiritual conditions in a law-abiding spiritual world, achieves triumphant spiritual results, is not fooling himself.

Another element is bound to characterize a religious experience which escapes illusion—self-renunciation. The egocentric nature of much popular religion is appalling. The perspective is all wrong. Even God becomes a matter of interest to many believers largely for what they can get out of him. They treat the Deity as a kind of universal valet to do odds and ends for them, a sort of "cosmic bellboy" for whom they push buttons, and who is expected to come running. "God for us," is the slogan of their faith, instead of, "Our lives for God."

As a result, much current religion becomes what the new attack takes it to be—an auxiliary of selfishness. The centripetal force of a selfish life, when that life becomes religious, sweeps the whole cosmos in. God himself becomes a nursemaid for our pets, and religion sinks into a comfortable faith that we shall be fondly taken care of, our wishes fulfilled, and our egocentric interests coddled. Professor Royce of Harvard used to tell his students never to look for "sugar-plums . . . in the home of the Infinite." That injunction is critically needed in contemporaneous religion. Looking for sugar-plums in the home of the Infinite is precisely what popular religion is concerned about.

All great religion, however, starts with self-renunciation and there is no great religion without it. Such faith is austere, rigorous, difficult. It promises no coddling and expects no sugar-plums. It does not use God as a *deus ex machina* which in an emergency will do our bidding; it believes in God as the source and conservator of spiritual values, and dedicates life to his service.

Strangely enough, Christianity has been and still is interpreted as the supreme example of a coddling, comfortable faith. Jesus' dominant doctrine, the sacredness of personality, given a selfish twist, leads Christians to put each his own personality into the center of the cosmos and to see the divine purposes arrange themselves in concentric circles around him. Are not the

very hairs of our heads numbered? Is it not the will of our Father that not one of these little ones should perish? Is not egoism bursting into songs like "That will be glory for me" the essential nature of Christianity?

It is amazing to find this flaccid interpretation of a faith whose symbol is the austere Cross. No one would be so astonished as Jesus himself at this rendering of his religion. He did believe in the sacredness of every personality, but to that truth he gave a self-renouncing turn. To give his life for the liberation and elevation of personality, asking as little as possible for himself and expending as much as possible of himself—to Jesus that was the upshot of believing that personality is sacred.

Indeed, as one listens to these Freudians and their various allies, one wonders why, if they really wish to know what religion is, they do not go to its noblest exhibitions. Would they judge music by jazz when there is Beethoven or architecture by automobile filling stations when there is Chartres? What the Freudians call religion Jesus of Nazareth called sin. Such religion was one of his first temptations, and the dramatic narrative of his rejection of it is on record. The Tempter took him to the temple top, so runs the story, and there said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." That is to say, Jesus was tempted of the devil to have a religion for comfort only. He was allured by the devil toward a religion in which angels would protect him from the consequences of broken law, and from that Satanic suggestion that he practice religion as the Freudians describe it he turned decisively away.

Follow, then, this life that so began its ministry, until it comes to its climax in Gethsemane. Jesus did not want to bear the torture of the Cross; he had seen folk crucified. His prayer, however, was not the egoistic cry of popular religion, "My will be done," but the contrary prayer of self-renunciation, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Is such religion a compensatory device to make life comfortable? Is it a fantasy by which we overlay cruel fact with pleasing fiction? Is it a world of desire to which we escape for easy solace from a ruthless situation?

A man whose religion, conceived in the spirit of self-renunciation, is centered in God, not as a bed to sleep on but as a banner to follow, is not fooling himself.

Moreover, a religious experience that is not deceitful will be one in which a man does not endeavor to escape the actual world but to transform it. To be sure, much nonsense is talked today about the psychological devices by which we retreat from life. The very word "escape" in modern psychiatric jargon has an undesirable significance. As a matter of fact, escapes are among the most admirable of our activities. If some of us could not retreat to nature and re-orient ourselves amid her spaces and silences, we should be undone. If some of us could not escape from the hurly-burly of our mechanistic age on the magic carpets of music and poetry to live for a while in the



mansions of the spirit, we should collapse. If some of us could not retreat to friendship, life would not be worth living. These are "escapes" but they reestablish us and return us to the world not less but better fitted to grapple with reality and throw it.

Suppose, then, that a man does not believe in atheism as the solution of the cosmic problem or think that this world is

. . . a lost ironclad  
Shipped with a crew of fools and mutineers  
To drift between the cold forts of the stars.

Suppose that he is convinced that the cosmos is a law-abiding and progressive system, grounded in intelligence and patterned by a purpose whose deepest reality is revealed in spiritual life, shall he not retreat to that? To call that in an evil sense a defense-mechanism is to beg the question. If materialism in any of its forms is true, then, to be sure, religion is a deceptive defense-mechanism, and so are most beautiful things in human experience. But if the world really does have spiritual meaning, then such religion is one of those indispensable orientations of the soul in its real environment which steady, strengthen, and transform our lives.

Religion, however, is much more than retreat, even when retreat is elevated to its noblest terms. Comfort is a strong word—fort, fortress, fortification, fortitude, fortify are its near relatives—and a great religion always has brought and always will bring comfort. But great religion does so not by escaping from the actual world but by supplying faith and courage to transform it.

When, knowing religious biography at its best, one listens to the new strategists putting religion into the same class with drugs and daydreams, as a means of escape from life, patience becomes difficult. To be sure, cheap men have always held a cheap religion. So a Buddhist priest said to a friend of mine: "Religion is a device to bring peace of mind into the midst of conditions as they are." This attitude is not exclusively Buddhist; much contemporaneous Christianity is of the same breed. It is the ultimate heresy, hating which as a travesty on religion, one welcomes Freud and all his kind if they can make the case against it plainer and press the attack upon it more relentlessly. But to call that cheap article real religion is to forget the notable exhibitions of another kind of faith, from some ancient Moses linking his life to the fortunes of a slave people until he liberated them to some modern Grenfell forgetting himself into immortality in Labrador. Such religion is not akin to drugs and daydreams; it means not escape from but transformation of the actual world.

It will be a sad day for the race if such religion vanishes. I see no likelihood of getting out of atheism the necessary faith and hope for social progress. Atheism pictures the universe as a crazy book in dealing with which we may indeed be scientific, may count the letters and not the method of their arrangement but may not be religious and so read sense and meaning

in the whole. The human mind will not forever avoid the logical consequences of such a world-view if it prevails.

"It cannot be doubted," one of the new psychological assailants writes, "that God has been a necessity to the human race, that He is still a necessity, and will long continue to be." Indeed he will, and it is notable that even those who think him an illusion admit the fact. Religion has been described as mere superstition, a left-over from the age of magic, a deliberate device of priestcraft for controlling the masses, but today such external descriptions are outmoded. Whatever else may be true of it, religion is one of the most deep-seated responses of the human organism, part and parcel of personality's method of getting on in the world. To dismiss it as a branch of pathological psychology is too cavalier a method of disposing of a profound matter.

The Freudians, in this regard, are lifting their sails into a passing gust of wind. Often clouded by ignorance and wandering in uncertainty, using fantasy when fact gives out and mistaking wishes for reality, religion shares the common fate of all things human, but at its heart even the skeptic must at times suspect that it is dealing with truth—"no transient brush of a fancied angel's wing," as Martineau puts it, "but the abiding presence and persuasion of the Soul of Souls."

## CAN THE CHURCH BE RELIGIOUS?

*Pearl S. Buck (1943)*

RELIGION today is judged not by the individuals who profess it so much as by the organization that professes it. The accomplishments of religion are judged more by the accomplishments of the organization than by the accomplishment of individuals in it. The comparison is made, in this judgment, between what the organization professes and what it does. Crudely put, the criticism which the world makes today is that organized religion preaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and does not practice these teachings. Individuals are almost entirely excused from this judgment. That is, everywhere there are devout persons working as devout persons ought to work, and these individuals are given their full share of appreciation, and yet their individual achievements and characters do not change the criticisms now being made of organized religion. Similarly, false and hypocritical persons are despised as individuals, and yet their behavior does not affect the judgment being passed upon the body corporate. Organized religion has taken on a life of its own, an entity.

### TESTIMONY FROM INDIA

I was talking the other day to a man of India, himself a Christian, and I said, "How is the Christian church regarded in your country?" I knew, but I wanted to hear what he had to say, since he is unusually sympathetic to the

people of our country and I felt his answer would be less biased by prejudice than that of some others I have heard. He replied, however, in the familiar way: "Christ we revere increasingly. I think Jesus Christ has come to India to stay. But the church? We will never accept it. It has done only evil."

"Surely many Christians have done good things in India?" I asked.

"Surely they have," he said. "But they were Christians first, and in so far as they were Christians first, they denied by their actions the church and its ways. No," he went on, "organized Western religion has taken on a life of its own, and it is the life of the proud and the superior. It has become an organization first. Its members belong to it—not it to them. India does not want this organization."

He is a simple man and he put it simply, but I think he expressed the point of view of many millions of people not only in India but everywhere in the world today. I have heard the same thing said in China and in other lands. In Japan the organization of religion stifled the members. But the organization has stifled the members in many places. Even here in America I have heard members of religious organizations wistfully wishing to put forth more effort to practice what they preach. "But it would never do in our church," they have said.

I have heard intelligent, religious-minded Chinese say very often that they cannot think that our organization of religion is a good thing because it has taken part in so many wars. And they have said that our organization has become paramount, so that its members think first of the organization and then of God. The history of the church in China is blackened with the record of priests and preachers who protected members at law courts, in the courts of public opinion, everywhere, in order that the organization might be preserved. Obviously unworthy persons joined the organization for the sake of this protection, and with their numbers the church became spiritually weakened. And a final charge brought against us is that our organization is intolerant of all other approaches to God.

#### CHARGES AGAINST ORGANIZED RELIGION

These are the major judgments I hear everywhere against our organized religion—militarism, the maintaining of organization for the sake of organization, and intolerance. All else is comprehended in these three. When I analyze them, it seems to me that they boil down to the one—the organization for the organization's sake instead of for the sake of man and his relation to God. The Christian church, for example, is not really militaristic, but it has steadfastly taken the side of the powers that be, whatever they were—and they have usually been militaristic, alas, in our Western world—and the church has taken this side because it is the safe side for its organization. Intolerance, too, has been essential to the organization. Unless the organization could make men believe that it held the exclusive rights to the gates of heaven, why should men join it rather than another?

Am I arguing against organized religion? No, I am not. A simple organization is necessary for any group in order to get the daily work done. A household must be organized in order to get its members cared for. A business must be organized for work. But when a household is organized so that the house and the organization are the chief thing, then the very meaning of home passes away from the house. A floor too clean to use, a room too tidy to live in, a house maintained for its own sake, is no longer a home, and the children wander away from it. When the church ceases to exist for the purpose for which it began—a fellowship of those who believe in God and want to do what God requires—when it begins to exist for itself as an organization, when its members begin to say, “Ought The Church to do this or that, or what stand ought The Church to take?” instead of asking, “Ought Christians to take this stand?” or “Ought Jews to do this?” then that organization has lost the spirit of true religion. In direct proportion as a church stands for The Church it ceases to stand for true religion.

#### BASIC TESTS OF RELIGION

Our religion as it exists today in its organized separate life seems to me to have little to do with the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. I see its members following those prejudices which deny the brotherhood of man, and not leading men toward brotherhood. I see it too often complacent and silent in the face of great human inequalities and injustices. How hateful is the silence of a professing man of God! True faith dies out of the church as a body when the life of the church is concerned with itself and no longer with man—his life, his relation to his brother, his relation to God. I am sickened when I see religion measuring its growth by membership.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

What shall we do with this consuming unwieldy growth of organized religion? It has taken on a separate life of its own, fastening itself upon the body of true religion, and sapping its life. Shall we reject organized religion?

It can scarcely be rejected, this organization which has gone on through one form or another for centuries, which today exists in its many forms. It exists as big industry exists, as mass production exists, as all huge organizations exist, by a sort of corporate power of its own. It has sucked in many souls to serve its life and these souls cannot distinguish any more between the organization and the religion. To them the organization has become the religion. To go to church on Sunday, or to go to confession, to kneel when it is time to kneel and to get up when it is time to get up, to sing a hymn, to listen to a chant, to put some money into a plate—this has become religion for the soul lost in the church. The fine fire of conversion has died down fruitlessly. The soul that cried aloud is silenced.

Is it asked what can be done? I would be presuming if I should try to tell the religious leadership of this country what to do. But I know what I would do if I were a church leader. I would, even if I were only one, go back to the simplest teachings of all great religions, the teachings they have in common, and try to see what these men in our world today where brotherhood is struggling anew to be born, where humanity is beginning dimly to see that there can be a better way of life than war and oppression and the subjection of one people to another. And when I had seen even one or two ways in which these teachings could be used, I would simply begin to practice them wherever I was, and at whatever cost.

Nor would I fear to be alone. I have at many times of my life drawn particular strength from that old story of the prophet who went and hid himself from God, and when God asked him why he was not working he said, somewhat sulkily, that there was none to help him, and what was the use of just one man trying to change the world? You will remember how the story goes—that God said, in effect, "Get right back to work. You are not the only one. There are good men to this number in that city and there are more of them elsewhere." And so God shamed that soul back to its duty.

#### NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

Often in my life it has seemed that I was a solitary fool to speak when others were silent. Yet when I spoke, I found many others ready to speak too, and the solitary voice became instantly a chorus, and things were done that in the silence people had whispered were impossible.

Literally nothing is impossible, not only with God, in whom Christians believe, but with the men that Christians are. Religion today could lead us as never before—if it were not absorbed in maintaining its own life. The hunger in men everywhere now is the supreme tragedy of our times—the hungry who are not fed, the groping who look for goodness, the hopeless who look for cause to hope. But religion as it is organized today cannot feed them, nor lead them, nor save them. Its only valuable function, speaking in non-religious terms, seems to be to give refuge.

There are people who find spiritual refuge in the church from the sorrows of their present life. This is perhaps particularly true of those in the Jewish faith, who find in their religious organization something which takes the place of country, which gives comfort in a sense of belonging somewhere. I will not deny that this may be a function of religion and yet I cannot believe that religion finds its highest expression in merely providing refuge. A believing soul finds refuge in his faith, it is true, but it ought to be the sort of refuge that provides a renewal of spirit and courage, not a withdrawal from life. *Refuge* is not so much the word as a *return to the source*. One returns again and again to the source of strength and renews oneself.

I believe in simplicity. One of the most profound teachings in any

religion is that one so common to many, that the simple things confound the wise. It is only when men dare to take large simple steps that suddenly the world leaps ahead. Complexities and confusions exist, men halt and stammer over them until suddenly in despair one says, "We must be free or we die," and men strike out for freedom. Or a man says, "Slavery must cease to exist," and a stroke of the pen wipes out slavery at any cost.

### THE NEED FOR BOLDNESS

So I believe that now men of God must dare to be simple, must dare to forget the complexities of their religious organizations and come forth with a few bold words. Believing in the fatherhood of God, let them declare newly the brotherhood of man. What are we doing about the brotherhood of man here in our own country? I see Jews fighting as Jews, refusing to make common cause with the Negro, lest the prejudice which darkens the life of the Jew grow darker by mixing itself with the prejudice which is so heavy against the Negro. And yet neither Jew nor Negro, nor any other denied the rights of full equality, will make a world where all can live together as human beings so long as he puts his own group above all others.

Until all of us work together for the brotherhood of man, there will be no brotherhood for any. If Christian church members are fainthearted and dare not speak out, then church leaders ought to speak out, and at whatever cost, even at the cost of losing their places in the organization. If they do not speak out, the organization itself is weakened by their silence, and the spirit of all religion is weakened by their silence, everywhere in the world. Silence is wicked when to be silent means to give assent.

I do not believe that a priest of God can urge a man to take a stand for right when that priest himself does not take such a stand, or considers it not his business so to do. Can a priest urge a man to practice equality between Negroes and white people when he himself does not practice it? I think not. Let the priest confess himself as weak as the man. The man fears to lose his job; the priest does too. Then let the priest not pretend to be able to lead the man to God. I cannot believe that man's faith should be or can be separated from man's practice, if the faith is a real one and not a collection of words handed down to him. I have lived so close to people that it may be I see them too plain. I see them hungering and thirsting for what they do not have.

I have been asked to discuss the changing race problem as my contribution to this series of articles. I have not wandered so far from it as may be thought. There is a new spirit rising in all the minorities. I have just come home from the West coast and I found it there, among the Mexicans. I know it is here among the Negroes, among the Japanese-Americans, among the Chinese-Americans. It is a new feeling of their essential oneness with all people. The war has been partly responsible, in placing its inexorable de-

mands upon all alike, so that those who fight are saying, Shall we fight the same war when we have not the same rights? And because the war must be fought they say, "Then we must have the same rights."

### THE DEMAND FOR BROTHERHOOD

The spirit of brotherhood is stirring afresh, not in brotherly love, but in demands for justice and for equal rewards for sacrifices. But this new spirit is amorphous and unshaped; it is appearing often as a protest and in anger, even in hostility toward all other groups. Never before has leadership been so badly needed, leadership which will take hold of these hostilities and merge them into one great constructive assertion of brotherhood for all groups. The minorities do not see that what they are fighting for is the same thing. They need to have their separate struggles united into the one great theme that all men are brothers, and as brothers must have equal opportunities for happiness and responsibilities.

The time has come, I believe, when the leaders of all religions must come forward with this uniting principle. United themselves, asserting their common purpose to accept in fellowship the leaders of all religions and to acknowledge the common foundation of their faiths, they must base upon this acknowledgment of the fatherhood of God their assertion that men are brothers. Those who profess the fatherhood of God must begin to act upon that principle in all ways, large and small, from refusing to enter places which exclude Negroes or members of other racial groups to insisting upon recognition of the brotherhood of man when the peace conference comes.

If what I have written seems too simple, I can only say that the root of all our troubles here and everywhere is the simple unwillingness of man to consider man his brother. Men have made money out of this denial of brotherhood, men have ruled others to their own profit and exploited them, and they have been able to do this, too, not only out of their own selfishness but also out of selfishness in the ones ruled, who have fought for their own release in terms only of themselves. But the world is shaken today. Anything can happen. Even the brotherhood of man might be established—if, haply, there were some to lead the way.

### THE RETURN TO RELIGION

*Gilbert K. Chesterton (1931)*

IN THE days when Huxley and Herbert Spencer and the Victorian agnostics were trumpeting as a final truth the famous hypothesis of Darwin, it seemed to thousands of simple people almost impossible that Christianity should survive. It is all the more ironic that it has not only survived them all, but it

is a perfect example, perhaps the only real example, of what they called the Survival of the Fittest.

It so happens that it does really and truly fit in with the theory offered by Darwin; which was something totally different from most of the theories accepted by Darwinians. This real original theory of Darwin has since very largely broken down in the general field of biology and botany; but it does actually apply to this particular argument in the field of religious history. The recent reëmergence of our religion is a survival of the fittest as Darwin meant it, and not as popular Darwinism meant it; so far as it meant anything. Among the innumerable muddles, which mere materialistic fashion made out of the famous theory, there was in many quarters a queer idea that the Struggle for Existence was of necessity an actual struggle between the candidates for survival; literally a cutthroat competition. There was a vague idea that the strongest creature violently triumphed over and trampled on the others. And the notion that this was the one method of improvement came everywhere as good news to bad men; to bad rulers, to bad employers, to swindlers and sweaters and the rest. The brisk owner of a bucket shop compared himself modestly to a mammoth, trampling down other mammoths in the primeval jungle. The businessman destroyed other businessmen, under the extraordinary delusion that the cohippic horse had devoured other cohippic horses. The rich man suddenly discovered that it was not only convenient but cosmic to starve or pillage the poor; because pterodactyls may have used their little hands to tear each other's eyes. Science, that nameless being, declared that the weakest must go to the wall; especially in Wall Street. There was a rapid decline and degradation in the sense of responsibility in the rich, from the merely rationalistic eighteenth century to the purely scientific nineteenth. The great Jefferson, when he reluctantly legalized slavery, said he trembled for his country, knowing that God is just. The profiteer of later times, when he legalized usury or financial trickery, was satisfied with himself, knowing that Nature is unjust.

But, however that may be (and of course the moral malady has survived the scientific mistake), the people who talked thus of cannibal horses and competitive oysters, did not understand what Darwin's thesis was. If later biologists have condemned it, it should not be condemned without being understood, widely as it has been accepted without being understood. The point of Darwinism was not that a bird with a longer beak (let us say) thrust it into other birds, and had the advantage of a duelist with a longer sword. The point of Darwinism was that the bird with the longer beak could reach worms (let us say) at the bottom of a deeper hole; that the birds who could not do so would die; and he alone would remain to found a race of long-beaked birds. Darwinism suggested that if this happened a vast number of times, in a vast series of ages, it might account for the difference between the beaks of a sparrow and a stork. But the point was that the fittest did not need to *struggle* against the unfit. The survivor had nothing to do except to



survive when the others could not survive. He survived because he alone had the features and organs necessary for survival. And, whatever be the truth about mammoths or monkeys, that is the exact truth about the present survival of Christianity. It is surviving because nothing else can survive.

Religion has returned; because all the various forms of scepticism that tried to take its place, and do its work, have by this time tied themselves into such knots that they cannot do anything. That chain of causation of which they were fond of talking (a chain which the first physicist of the age has just burst into bits of scrap iron) seems really to have served them after the fashion of the proverbial rope; and when modern discussion gave them rope enough, they quite rapidly hanged themselves. For there is not a single one of the fashionable forms of scientific scepticism, or determinism, that does not end in stark paralysis, touching the practical conduct of human life. Take any three of the normal and necessary ideas on which civilisation and even society depend. First, let us say, a scientific man of the old normal nineteenth-century sort would remark, "We can at least have common sense, in its proper meaning of a sense of reality common to all; we can have common morals, for without them we cannot even have a community; a man must in the ordinary sense obey the law, and especially the moral law." But the newer sceptic, who is progressive and has gone further and fared worse, will immediately say, "Why should you worship the taboo of your particular tribe? Why should you accept prejudices that are the product of a blind herd instinct? Why is there any authority in the unanimity of a flock of frightened sheep?" Suppose the normal man falls back on the deeper argument: "I am not terrorised by the tribe; I do keep my independent judgment; I have a conscience and a light of justice within which judges the world." And the stronger sceptic will answer: "If the light in your body be darkness—and it is darkness because it is only in your body, what are your judgments but the incurable twist and bias of your particular heredity and accidental environment? What can we know about judgments, except that they must all be equally unjust? For they are all equally conditioned by defects and individual ignorances, all of them different and none of them distinguishable; for there exists no single man so sane and separate as to be able to distinguish them justly. Why should your conscience be any more reliable than your rotting teeth or your quite special defect of eyesight? God bless us all, one would think you believed in God!" Then perhaps the normal person will get annoyed and say rather snappishly: "At least, suppose we are men of science; there is science to appeal to and she will always answer; the evidential and experimental discovery of real things." And the other sceptic will answer, if he has any sense of humour: "Why, certainly. Sir Arthur Eddington is Science; and he will tell you that man really has free will and ought to hang on to religion for his life. Sir Bertram Windle was Science; and he would tell you that the scientific mind is completely satisfied in the Roman Catholic Church. For that matter, Sir Oliver Lodge is Science; and he has reached by

purely experimental and evidential methods to a solid belief in ghosts. But I admit that there are men of science who cannot get to a solid belief in anything; even in science; even in themselves. There is the crystallographer of Cambridge who writes in the *Spectator* the lucid sentence: 'We know that most of what we know is probably untrue.' Does that help you on a bit, in founding your sane and solid society?"

It is the perishing of the other things, at least as much as the persistence of one thing, that has left us at last face to face with the ancient religion of our fathers. The thing once called free thought has come finally to threaten everything that is free. It denies personal freedom in denying free will and the human power of choice. It threatens civic freedom with a plague of hygienic and psychological quackeries, spreading over the land such a network of pseudo-scientific nonsense as free citizens have never yet endured in history. It is quite likely to reverse religious freedom, in the name of some barbarous nostrum or other, such as constitutes the crude and ill-cultured creed of Russia. It is perfectly capable of imposing silence and impotence from without. But there is no doubt whatever that it imposes silence and impotence from within. The whole trend of it, which began as a drive and has ended in a drift, is towards some form of the theory that a man cannot help himself; that a man cannot mend himself; above all, that a man cannot free himself. In all its novels and most of its newspaper articles it takes for granted that men are stamped and fixed in certain types of abnormality or anarchical weakness; that they are pinned and labelled in a museum of morality or immorality; or of that sort of unmorality which is more priggish than the one and more hoggish than the other. We are practically told that we might as well ask a fossil to reform itself. We are told that we are asking a stuffed bird to repent. We are all dead, and the only comfort is that we are all classified. For by this philosophy, which is the same as that of the blackest of Puritan heresies, we all died before we were born. But as it is Kismet without Allah, so also it is Calvinism without God.

The agnostics will be gratified to learn that it is entirely due to their own energy and enterprise, to their own activity in pursuing their own antics, that the world has at last tired of their antics and told them so. We have done very little against them; *non nobis, Domine*; the glory of their final overthrow is all their own. We have done far less than we should have done to explain all that balance of subtlety and sanity which is meant by a Christian civilization. Our thanks are due to those who have so generously helped us, by giving a glimpse of what might be meant by a Pagan civilization. And what is lost in that society is not so much religion as reason; the ordinary common daylight of intellectual instinct that has guided the children of men. A world in which men know that most of what they know is probably untrue cannot be dignified with the name of a sceptical world; it is simply an impotent and abject world, not attacking anything, but accepting everything while trusting nothing, accepting even its own incapacity to attack, accepting its own lack of

authority to accept, doubting its very right to doubt. We are grateful for this public experiment and demonstration; it has taught us much. We did not believe that rationalists were so utterly mad until they made it quite clear to us. We did not ourselves think that the mere denial of our dogmas could end in such dehumanised and demented anarchy. It might have taken the world a long time to understand that what it had been taught to dismiss as mediæval theology was often mere common sense; although the very term common sense or *communis sententia* was a mediæval conception. But it took the world very little time to understand that the talk on the other side was most uncommon nonsense. It was nonsense that could not be made the basis of any common system, such as has been founded upon common sense.

To take one example out of many: the whole question of Marriage has been turned into a question of Mood. The enemies of marriage did not have the patience to remain in their relatively strong position; that marriage could not be proved to be sacramental; and that some exceptions must be treated as exceptions, so long as it was merely social. They could not be content to say that it is not a sacrament but a contract; and that exceptional legal action might break a contract. They brought objections against it that would be quite as facile and quite as futile if brought against any other contract. They said that a man is never in the same mood for ten minutes together; that he must not be asked to admire in a red daybreak what he admired in a yellow sunset; that no man can say he will even be the same man by the next month or the next minute; that new and nameless tortures may afflict him if his wife wears a different hat; or that he may plunge her into hell by putting on a pair of socks that does not harmonise with somebody else's carpet. It is quite obvious that this sort of sensitive insanity applies as much to any other human relation as to this relation. A man cannot choose a profession because, long before he has qualified as an architect, he may have mystically changed into an aviator, or been convulsed in rapid suggestions by the emotions of a ticket-collector, a trombone-player, and a professional harpooner of whales. A man dare not buy a house, for fear a fatal stranger with the wrong sort of socks should come into it, or for fear his own mind should be utterly changed in the matter of carpets or cornices. A man may suddenly decline to do any business with his own business partner, because he also, like the cruel husband, wears the wrong necktie. And I saw a serious printed appeal for sympathy for a wife who deserted her family because her psychology was incompatible with orange neckties. This is only one application, as I say, but it exactly illustrates how the sceptical principle is now applied, and how scepticism has recently changed from apparent sense to quite self-evident nonsense. The heresies not only decay but destroy themselves—in any case they perish without a blow.

For the reply, not merely of religion but of reason and the rooted sanity of mankind, is obvious enough. "If you feel like that, why certainly you will not found families, or found anything else. You will not build houses; you

will not make partnerships; you will not in any fashion do the business of the world. You will never plant a tree lest you wish next week you had planted it somewhere else; you will never put a potato into a pot of stew, because it will be too late to take it out again; your whole mood is stricken and riddled with cowardice and sterility; your whole way of attacking any problem is to think of excuses for not attacking it at all. Very well, so be it; the Lord be with you. You may be respected for being sincere; you may be pitied for being sensitive; you may retain some of the corrective qualities which make it useful on occasion to be sceptical. But if you are too sceptical to do these things, you must stand out of the way of those who can do them; you must hand over the world to those who believe that the world is workable, to those who believe that men can make houses, make partnerships, make appointments, make promises—and keep them. And, if it is necessary to believe in God making Man, in God being made Man, or in God made Man coming in the clouds in glory, in order to keep a promise or boil a potato or behave like a human being—well, then you must at least give a chance to these credulous fanatics, who can believe the one and who can do the other.” That is what I mean by the spiritual Survival of the Fittest. That is why the old phrase, which is probably a mistake in natural history, is a truth in supernatural history. The organic thing called religion has, in fact, the organs that take hold on life. It can feed where the fastidious doubter finds no food; it can reproduce where the solitary sceptic boasts of being barren. It may be accepting miracles to believe in free will; but it is accepting madness, sooner or later, to disbelieve in it. It may be a wild risk to make a vow; but it is a quiet, crawling, and inevitable ruin to refuse to make a vow. It may be incredible that one creed is the truth and the others are relatively false; but it is not only incredible, but also intolerable, that there is no truth either in or out of creeds, and all are equally false. For nobody can ever set anything right if everybody is equally wrong. The intense interest of the moment is that the Man of Science, the hero of the modern world and the latest of the great servants of humanity, has suddenly and dramatically refused to have anything more to do with this dreary business of nibbling negation, and blind scratching and scraping away of the very foundations of the mastery of man. For the work of the sceptic for the past hundred years has indeed been very like the fruitless fury of some primeval monster; eyeless, mindless, merely destructive and devouring; a giant worm wasting away a world that he could not even see; a benighted and bestial life, unconscious of its own cause and of its own consequences. But Man has taken to himself again his own weapons—will, and worship, and reason, and the vision of the plan in things—and we are once more in the morning of the world.

## GOD'S LONELY MAN

*Thomas Wolfe (1941)*

MY LIFE, more than that of anyone I know, has been spent in solitude and wandering. Why this is true, or how it happened, I cannot say; yet it is so. From my fifteenth year—save for a single interval—I have lived about as solitary a life as a modern man can have. I mean by this that the number of hours, days, months, and years that I have spent alone has been immense and extraordinary. I propose, therefore, to describe the experience of human loneliness exactly as I have known it.

The reason that impels me to do this is not that I think my knowledge of loneliness different in kind from that of other men. Quite the contrary. The whole conviction of my life now rests upon the belief that loneliness, far from being a rare and curious phenomenon, peculiar to myself and to a few other solitary men, is the central and inevitable fact of human existence. When we examine the moments, acts, and statements of all kinds of people—not only the grief and ecstasy of the greatest poets, but also the huge unhappiness of the average soul, as evidenced by the innumerable strident words of abuse, hatred, contempt, mistrust, and scorn that forever grate upon our ears as the manswarm passes us in the streets—we find, I think, that they are all suffering from the same thing. The final cause of their complaint is loneliness.

But if my experience of loneliness has not been different in kind from that of other men, I suspect it has been sharper in intensity. This gives me the best authority in the world to write of this, our general complaint, for I believe I know more about it than anyone of my generation. In saying this, I am merely stating a fact as I see it, though I realize that it may sound like arrogance or vanity. But before anyone jumps to that conclusion, let him consider how strange it would be to meet with arrogance in one who has lived alone as much as I. The surest cure for vanity is loneliness. For, more than other men, we who dwell in the heart of solitude are always the victims of self-doubt. Forever and forever in our loneliness, shameful feelings of inferiority will rise up suddenly to overwhelm us in a poisonous flood of horror, disbelief, and desolation, to sicken and corrupt our health and confidence, to spread pollution at the very root of strong, exultant joy. And the eternal paradox of it is that if a man is to know the triumphant labor of creation, he must for long periods resign himself to loneliness, and suffer loneliness to rob him of the health, the confidence, the belief and joy which are essential to creative work.

To live alone as I have lived, a man should have the confidence of God, the tranquil faith of a monastic saint, the stern impregnability of Gibraltar. Lacking these, there are times when anything, everything, all or nothing, the most trivial incidents, the most casual words, can in an instant strip me of my armor, palsy my hand, constrict my heart with frozen horror, and fill my

bowels with the gray substance of shuddering impotence. Sometimes it is nothing but a shadow passing on the sun; sometimes nothing but the torrid milky light of August, or the naked, sprawling ugliness and squalid decencies of streets in Brooklyn fading in the weary vistas of that milky light and evoking the intolerable misery of countless drab and nameless lives. Sometimes it is just the barren horror of raw concrete, or the heat blazing on a million beetles of machinery darting through the torrid streets, or the cindered weariness of parking spaces, or the slamming smash and racket of the El, or the driven manswarm of the earth, thrusting on forever in exacerbated fury, going nowhere in a hurry.

Again, it may be just a phrase, a look, a gesture. It may be the cold, disdainful inclination of the head with which a precious, kept, exquisite princeling of Park Avenue acknowledges an introduction, as if to say: "You are nothing." Or it may be a sneering reference and dismissal by a critic in a high-class weekly magazine. Or a letter from a woman saying I am lost and ruined, my talent vanished, all my efforts false and worthless—since I have forsaken the truth, vision, and reality which are so beautifully her own.

And sometimes it is less than these—nothing I can touch or see or hear or definitely remember. It may be so vague as to be a kind of hideous weather of the soul, subtly compounded of all the hunger, fury, and impossible desire my life has ever known. Or, again, it may be a half-forgotten memory of the cold wintry red of waning Sunday afternoons in Cambridge, and of a pallid, sensitive, æsthetic face that held me once in earnest discourse on such a Sunday afternoon in Cambridge, telling me that all my youthful hopes were pitiful delusions and that all my life would come to naught, and the red and waning light of March was reflected on the pallid face with a desolate impotence that instantly quenched all the young ardors of my blood.

Beneath the evocations of these lights and weathers, and the cold, disdainful words of precious, sneering, and contemptuous people, all of the joy and singing of the day goes out like an extinguished candle, hope seems lost to me forever, and every truth that I have ever found and known seems false. At such a time the lonely man will feel that all the evidence of his own senses has betrayed him, and that nothing really lives and moves on earth but creatures of the death-in-life—those of the cold, constricted heart and the sterile loins, who exist forever in the red waning light of March and Sunday afternoon.

All this hideous doubt, despair, and dark confusion of the soul a lonely man must know, for he is united to no image save that which he creates himself, he is bolstered by no other knowledge save that which he can gather for himself with the vision of his own eyes and brain. He is sustained and cheered and aided by no party, he is given comfort by no creed, he has no faith in him except his own. And often that faith deserts him, leaving him shaken and filled with impotence. And then it seems to him that his life has come to nothing, that he is ruined, lost, and broken past redemption, and that morning—

bright, shining morning, with its promise of new beginnings—will never come upon the earth again as it did once.

He knows that dark time is flowing by him like a river. The huge, dark wall of loneliness is around him now. It encloses and presses in upon him, and he cannot escape. And the cancerous plant of memory is feeding at his entrails, recalling hundreds of forgotten faces and ten thousand vanished days, until all life seems as strange and insubstantial as a dream. Time flows by him like a river, and he waits in his little room like a creature held captive by an evil spell. And he will hear, far off, the murmurous drone of the great earth, and feel that he has been forgotten, that his powers are wasting from him while the river flows, and that all his life has come to nothing. He feels that his strength is gone, his power withered, while he sits there drugged and fettered in the prison of his loneliness.

Then suddenly, one day, for no apparent reason, his faith and his belief in life will come back to him in a tidal flood. It will rise up in him with a jubilant and invincible power, bursting a window in the world's great wall and restoring everything to shapes of deathless brightness. Made miraculously whole and secure in himself, he will plunge once more into the triumphant labor of creation. All his old strength is his again: he knows what he knows, he is what he is, he has found what he has found. And he will say the truth that is in him, speak it even though the whole world deny it, affirm it though a million men cry out that it is false.

At such a moment of triumphant confidence, with this feeling in me, I dare now assert that I have known Loneliness as well as any man, and will now write of him as if he were my very brother, which he is. I will paint him for you with such fidelity to his true figure that no man who reads will ever doubt his visage when Loneliness comes to him hereafter.

The most tragic, sublime, and beautiful expression of human loneliness which I have ever read is the Book of Job; the grandest and most philosophical, Ecclesiastes. Here I must point out a fact which is so much at variance with everything I was told as a child concerning loneliness and the tragic underweft of life that, when I first discovered it, I was astounded and incredulous, doubting the overwhelming weight of evidence that had revealed it to me. But there it was, as solid as a rock, not to be taken or denied; and as the years passed, the truth of this discovery became part of the structure of my life.

The fact is this: the lonely man, who is also the tragic man, is invariably the man who loves life dearly—which is to say, the joyful man. In these statements there is no paradox whatever. The one condition implies the other, and makes it necessary. The essence of human tragedy is in loneliness, not in conflict, no matter what the arguments of the theater may assert. And just as the great tragic writer (I say "the tragic writer" as distinguished from "the writer of tragedies," for certain nations, the Roman and French among them, have

had no great tragic writers, for Vergil and Racine were none, but rather great writers of tragedy): just as the great tragic writer—Job, Sophocles, Dante, Milton, Swift, Dostoevski—has always been the lonely man, so has he also been the man who loved life best and had the deepest sense of joy. The real quality and substance of human joy is to be found in the works of these great tragic writers as nowhere else in all the records of man's life upon the earth. In proof of this, I can give here one conclusive illustration:

In my childhood, any mention of the Book of Job evoked instantly in my mind a long train of gloomy, gray, and unbrokenly dismal associations. This has been true, I suspect, with most of us. Such phrases as "Job's comforter," and "the patience of Job," and "the afflictions of Job," have become part of our common idiom and are used to refer to people whose woes seem uncountable and unceasing, who have suffered long and silently, and whose gloom has never been interrupted by a ray of hope or joy. All these associations had united to make for me a picture of the Book of Job that was grim, bleak, and constant in its misery. When I first read it as a child, it seemed to me that the record of Job's tribulations was relieved only by a kind of gloomy and unwilling humor—a humor not intended by the author, but supplied by my own exasperations, for my childish sense of proportion and justice was at length so put upon by this dreary tidal flood of calamities that I had to laugh in protest.

But any reader of intelligence and experience who has read that great book in his mature years will realize how false such a picture is. For the Book of Job, far from being dreary, gray, and dismal, is woven entire, more than any single piece of writing I can recall, from the sensuous, flashing, infinitely various, and gloriously palpable material of great poetry; and it wears at the heart of its tremendous chant of everlasting sorrow the exulting song of everlasting joy.

In this there is nothing strange or curious, but only what is inevitable and right. For the tragic writer knows that joy is rooted at the heart of sorrow, that ecstasy is shot through with the sudden crimson thread of pain, that the knife-thrust of intolerable desire and the wild, brief glory of possession are pierced most bitterly, at the very instant of man's greatest victory, by the premonitory sense of loss and death. So seen and so felt, the best and worst that the human heart can know are merely different aspects of the same thing, and are interwoven, both together, into the tragic web of life.

It is the sense of death and loneliness, the knowledge of the brevity of his days, and the huge impending burden of his sorrow, growing always, never lessening, that makes joy glorious, tragic, and unutterably precious to a man like Job. Beauty comes and passes, is lost the moment that we touch it, can no more be stayed or held than one can stay the flowing of a river. Out of this pain of loss, this bitter ecstasy of brief having, this fatal glory of the single moment, the tragic writer will therefore make a song for joy. That, at least, he may keep and treasure always. And his song is full of grief, because



he knows that joy is fleeting, gone the instant that we have it, and that is why it is so precious, gaining its full glory from the very things that limit and destroy it.

He knows that joy gains its glory out of sorrow, bitter sorrow, and man's loneliness, and that it is haunted always with the certainty of death, dark death, which stops our tongues, our eyes, our living breath, with the twin oblivions of dust and nothingness. Therefore a man like Job will make a chant for sorrow, too, but it will still be a song for joy as well, and one more strange and beautiful than any other that man has ever sung:

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?  
Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

That is joy—joy solemn and triumphant; stern, lonely, everlasting joy, which has in it the full depth and humility of man's wonder, his sense of glory, and his feeling of awe before the mystery of the universe. An exultant cry is torn from our lips as we read the lines about that glorious horse, and the joy we feel is wild and strange, lonely and dark like death, and grander than the delicate and lovely joy that men like Herrick and Theocritus described, great poets though they were.

Just as the Book of Job and the sermon of Ecclesiastes are, each in its own way, supreme histories of man's loneliness, so do all the books of the Old Testament, in their entirety, provide the most final and profound literature of human loneliness that the world has known. It is astonishing with what a coherent unity of spirit and belief the life of loneliness is recorded in those many books—how it finds its full expression in the chants, songs, prophecies, and chronicles of so many men, all so various, and each so individual, each revealing some new image of man's secret and most lonely heart, and all combining to produce a single image of his loneliness that is matchless in its grandeur and magnificence.

Thus, in a dozen books of the Old Testament—in Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon; in Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah; in words of praise and words of lamentation; in songs of triumph and in chants of sorrow, bondage, and despair; in boasts of pride and arrogant assertion, and in stricken con-

fessions of humility and fear; in warning, promise, and in prophecy; in love, hate, grief, death, loss, revenge, and resignation; in wild, singing jubilation and in bitter sorrow—the lonely man has wrought out in a swelling and tremendous chorus the final vision of his life.

The total, all-contributory unity of this conception of man's loneliness in the books of the Old Testament becomes even more astonishing when we begin to read the New. For, just as the Old Testament becomes the chronicle of the life of loneliness, the gospels of the New Testament, with the same miraculous and unswerving unity, become the chronicle of the life of love. What Christ is saying always, what he never swerves from saying, what he says a thousand times and in a thousand different ways, but always with a central unity of belief, is this: "I am my Father's son, and you are my brothers." And the unity that binds us all together, that makes this earth a family, and all men brothers and the sons of God, is love.

The central purpose of Christ's life, therefore, is to destroy the life of loneliness and to establish here on earth the life of love. The evidence to support this is clear and overwhelming. It should be obvious to everyone that when Christ says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven," "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted," "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," and "Blessed are which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled," "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," and "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"—Christ is not here extolling the qualities of humility, sorrow, meekness, righteousness, mercy, and purity as virtues sufficient in themselves, but he promises to men who have these virtues the richest reward that men were ever offered.

And what is that reward? It is a reward that promises not only the inheritance of the earth, but the kingdom of heaven as well. It tells men that they shall not live and die in loneliness, that their sorrow will not go unassuaged, their prayers unheard, their hunger and thirst unfed, their love unrequited: but that, through love, they shall destroy the walls of loneliness forever; and even if the evil and unrighteous of this earth shall grind them down into the dust, yet if they bear all things meekly and with love, they will enter into a fellowship of joy, a brotherhood of love, such as no man on earth ever knew before.

Such was the final intention of Christ's life, the purpose of His teaching. And its total import was that the life of loneliness could be destroyed forever by the life of love. Or such, at least, has been the meaning which I read into his life. For in these recent years when I have lived alone so much, and known loneliness so well, I have gone back many times and read the story of this man's words and life to see if I could find in them a meaning for myself, a way of life that would be better than the one I had. I read what he had said, not in a mood of piety or holiness, not from a sense of sin, a feeling of contrition, or because his promise of a heavenly reward meant very much to

me. But I tried to read his bare words nakedly and simply, as it seems to me he must have uttered them, and as I have read the words of other men—of Homer, Donne, and Whitman, and the writer of Ecclesiastes—and if the meaning I have put upon his words seems foolish or extravagant, childishly simple or banal, mine alone are not different from what ten million other men have thought. I have only set it down here as I saw it, felt it, found it for myself, and have tried to add, subtract, and alter nothing.

And now I know that though the way and meaning of Christ's life is a far, far better way and meaning than my own, yet I can never make it mine; and I think that this is true of all the other lonely men that I have seen or known about—the nameless, voiceless, faceless atoms of this earth as well as Job and Everyman and Swift. And Christ himself, who preached the life of love, was yet as lonely as any man that ever lived. Yet I could not say that he was mistaken because he preached the life of love and fellowship, and lived and died in loneliness; nor would I dare assert his way was wrong because a billion men have since professed his way and never followed it.

I can only say that I could not make his way my own. For I have found the constant, everlasting weather of man's life to be, not love, but loneliness. Love itself is not the weather of our lives. It is the rare, the precious flower. Sometimes it is the flower that gives us life, that breaches the dark walls of all our loneliness and restores us to the fellowship of life, the family of the earth, the brotherhood of man. But sometimes love is the flower that brings us death; and from it we get pain and darkness; and the mutilations of the soul, the maddening of the brain, may be in it.

How or why or in what way the flower of love will come to us, whether with life or death, triumph or defeat, joy or madness, no man on this earth can say. But I know that at the end, forever at the end for us—the houseless, homeless, doorless, driven wanderers of life, the lonely men—there waits forever the dark visage of our comrade, Loneliness.

But the old refusals drop away, the old avowals stand—and we who were dead have risen, we who were lost are found again, and we who sold the talent, the passion, and belief of youth into the keeping of the fleshless dead, until our hearts were corrupted, our talent wasted, and our hope gone, have won our lives back bloodily, in solitude and darkness; and we know that things will be for us as they have been, and we see again, as we saw once, the image of the shining city. Far flung, and blazing into tiers of jeweled light, it burns forever in our vision as we walk the Bridge, and strong tides are bound round it, and the great ships call. And we walk the Bridge, always we walk the Bridge alone with you, stern friend, the one to whom we speak, who never failed us. Hear:

"Loneliness forever and the earth again! Dark brother and stern friend, immortal face of darkness and of night, with whom the half part of my life was spent, and with whom I shall abide now till my death forever—what is there for me to fear as long as you are with me? Heroic friend, blood-brother

of my life, dark face—have we not gone together down a million ways, have we not coursed together the great and furious avenues of night, have we not crossed the stormy seas alone, and known strange lands, and come again to walk the continent of night and listen to the silence of the earth? Have we not been brave and glorious when we were together, friend? Have we not known triumph, joy, and glory on this earth—and will it not be again with me as it was then, if you come back to me? Come to me, brother, in the watches of the night. Come to me in the secret and most silent heart of darkness. Come to me as you always came, bringing to me again the old invincible strength, the deathless hope, the triumphant joy and confidence that will storm the earth again.”

### A FREE MAN'S WORSHIP

*Bertrand Russell (1918)*

TO DR. FAUSTUS in his study Mephistopheles told the history of the Creation, saying:

“The endless praises of the choirs of angels had begun to grow wearisome; for, after all, did he not deserve their praise? Had he not given them endless joy? Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he tortured? He smiled inwardly, and resolved that the great drama should be performed.

“For countless ages the hot nebula whirled aimlessly through space. At length it began to take shape, the central mass threw off planets, the planets cooled, boiling seas and burning mountains heaved and tossed, from black masses of cloud hot sheets of rain deluged the barely solid crust. And now the first germ of life grew in the depths of the ocean, and developed rapidly in the fructifying warmth into vast forest trees, huge ferns springing from the damp mould, sea monsters breeding, fighting, devouring, and passing away. And from the monsters, as the play unfolded itself, Man was born, with the power of thought, the knowledge of good and evil, and the cruel thirst for worship. And Man saw that all is passing in this mad, monstrous world, that all is struggling to snatch, at any cost, a few brief moments of life before Death's inexorable decree. And Man said: ‘There is a hidden purpose, could we but fathom it, and the purpose is good; for we must reverence something, and in the visible world there is nothing worthy of reverence.’ And Man stood aside from the struggle, resolving that God intended harmony to come out of chaos by human efforts. And when he followed the instincts which God had transmitted to him from his ancestry of beasts of prey, he called it Sin, and asked God to forgive him. But he doubted whether he could be justly forgiven, until he invented a Divine Plan by which God's wrath was to have been appeased. And seeing the present was bad, he made it yet

worse, that thereby the future might be better. And he gave God thanks for the strength that enabled him to forgo even the joys that were possible. And God smiled; and when he saw that Man had become perfect in renunciation and worship, he sent another sun through the sky, which crashed into Man's sun; and all returned again to nebula.

"'Yes,' he murmured, 'it was a good play; I will have it performed again.'"

Such, in outline, but even more purposeless, more void of meaning is the world which Science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

How, in such an alien and inhuman world, can so powerless a creature as Man preserve his aspirations untarnished? A strange mystery it is that Nature, omnipotent but blind, in the revolutions of her secular hurrying through the abysses of space, has brought forth at last a child, subject still to her power, but gifted with sight, with knowledge of good and evil, with the capacity of judging all the works of his unthinking Mother. In spite of Death, the mark and seal of the parental control, Man is yet free, during his brief years, to examine, to criticise, to know, and in imagination to create. To him alone, in the world with which he is acquainted, this freedom belongs; and in this lies his superiority to the resistless forces that control his outward life.

The savage, like ourselves, feels the oppression of his impotence before the powers of Nature; but having in himself nothing that he respects more than Power, he is willing to prostrate himself before his gods, without inquiring whether they are worthy of his worship. Pathetic and very terrible is the long history of cruelty and torture, of degradation and human sacrifice endured in the hope of placating the jealous gods: surely, the trembling believer thinks, when what is most precious has been freely given, their lust for blood must be appeased, and more will not be required. The religion of Moloch—as such creeds may be generically called—is in essence the cringing submission of the slave, who dare not, even in his heart, allow the thought that his master deserves no adulation. Since the independence of ideals is not yet acknowledged, Power may be freely worshipped, and receive an unlimited respect, despite its wanton infliction of pain.

But gradually, as morality grows bolder, the claim of the ideal world begins to be felt; and worship, if it is not to cease, must be given to gods of another kind than those created by the savage. Some, though they feel the demands of the ideal, will still consciously reject them, still urging that naked Power is worthy of worship. Such is the attitude inculcated in God's answer to Job out of the whirlwind: the divine power and knowledge are paraded, but of the divine goodness there is no hint. Such also is the attitude of those who, in our own day, base their morality upon the struggle for survival, maintaining that the survivors are necessarily the fittest. But others, not content with an answer so repugnant to the moral sense, will adopt the position which we have become accustomed to regard as specially religious, maintaining that, in some hidden manner, the world of fact is really harmonious with the world of ideals. Thus Man creates God, all-powerful and all-good, the mystic unity of what is and what should be.

But the world of fact, after all, is not good; and, in submitting our judgment to it, there is an element of slavishness from which our thoughts must be purged. For in all things it is well to exalt the dignity of Man, by freeing him as far as possible from the tyranny of non-human Power. When we have realised that Power is largely bad, that man, with his knowledge of good and evil, is but a helpless atom in a world which has no such knowledge, the choice is again presented to us: Shall we worship Force, or shall we worship Goodness? Shall our God exist and be evil, or shall he be recognised as the creation of our own conscience?

The answer to this question is very momentous, and affects profoundly our whole morality. The worship of Force, to which Carlyle and Nietzsche and the creed of Militarism have accustomed us, is the result of failure to maintain our own ideals against a hostile universe: it is itself a prostrate submission to evil, a sacrifice of our best to Moloch. If strength indeed is to be respected, let us respect rather the strength of those who refuse that false "recognition of facts" which fails to recognise that facts are often bad. Let us admit that, in the world we know, there are many things that would be better otherwise, and that the ideals to which we do and must adhere are not realised in the realm of matter. Let us preserve our respect for truth, for beauty, for the ideal of perfection which life does not permit us to attain, though none of these things meet with the approval of the unconscious universe. If Power is bad, as it seems to me, let us reject it from our hearts. In this lies Man's true freedom: in determination to worship only the God created by our own love of the good, to respect only the heaven which inspires the insight of our best moments. In action, in desire, we must submit perpetually to the tyranny of outside forces; but in thought, in aspiration, we are free, free from our fellow-men, free from the petty planet on which our bodies impotently crawl, free even, while we live, from the tyranny of death. Let us learn, then, that energy of faith which enables us to live constantly in the vision of the good; and let us descend in action, into the world of fact, with that vision always before us.

When first the opposition of fact and ideal grows fully visible, a spirit of fiery revolt, of fierce hatred of the gods, seems necessary to the assertion of freedom. To defy with Promethean constancy a hostile universe, to keep its evil always in view, always actively hated, to refuse no pain that the malice of Power can invent, appears to be the duty of all who will not bow before the inevitable. But indignation is still a bondage, for it compels our thoughts to be occupied with an evil world; and in the fierceness of desire from which rebellion springs there is a kind of self-assertion which it is necessary for the wise to overcome. Indignation is a submission of our thoughts, but not of our desires; the Stoic freedom in which wisdom consists is found in the submission of our desires, but not of our thoughts. From the submission of our desires springs the virtue of resignation; from the freedom of our thoughts springs the whole world of art and philosophy, and the vision of beauty by which, at last, we half reconquer the reluctant world. But the vision of beauty is possible only to unfettered contemplation, to thoughts not weighted by the load of eager wishes; and thus Freedom comes only to those who no longer ask of life that it shall yield them any of those personal goods that are subject to the mutations of Time.

Although the necessity of renunciation is evidence of the existence of evil, yet Christianity, in preaching it, has shown a wisdom exceeding that of the Promethean philosophy of rebellion. It must be admitted that, of the things we desire, some, though they prove impossible, are yet real goods; others, however, as ardently longed for, do not form part of a fully purified ideal. The belief that what must be renounced is bad, though sometimes false, is far less often false than untamed passion supposes; and the creed of religion, by providing a reason for proving that it is never false, has been the means of purifying our hopes by the discovery of many austere truths.

But there is in resignation a further good element: even real goods, when they are unattainable, ought not to be fretfully desired. To every man comes, sooner or later, the great renunciation. For the young, there is nothing unattainable; a good thing desired with the whole force of a passionate will, and yet impossible, is to them not credible. Yet, by death, by illness, by poverty, or by the voice of duty, we must learn, each one of us, that the world was not made for us, and that, however beautiful may be the things we crave, Fate may nevertheless forbid them. It is the part of courage, when misfortune comes, to bear without repining the ruin of our hopes, to turn away our thoughts from vain regrets. This degree of submission to Power is not only just and right: it is the very gate of wisdom.

But passive renunciation is not the whole of wisdom; for not by renunciation alone can we build a temple for the worship of our own ideals. Haunting foreshadowings of the temple appear in the realm of imagination, in music, in architecture, in the untroubled kingdom of reason, and in the golden sunset magic of lyrics, where beauty shines and glows, remote from the touch of sorrow, remote from the fear of change, remote from the failures and disenchantments of the world of fact. In the contemplation of these

things the vision of heaven will shape itself in our hearts, giving at once a touchstone to judge the world about us and an inspiration by which to fashion to our needs whatever is not incapable of serving as a stone in the sacred temple.

Except for those rare spirits that are born without sin, there is a cavern of darkness to be traversed before that temple can be entered. The gate of the cavern is despair, and its floor is paved with the gravestones of abandoned hopes. There Self must die; there the eagerness, the greed of untamed desire must be slain, for only so can the soul be freed from the empire of Fate. But out of the cavern the Gate of Renunciation leads again to the daylight of wisdom, by whose radiance a new insight, a new joy, a new tenderness, shine forth to gladden the pilgrim's heart.

When, without the bitterness of impotent rebellion, we have learnt both to resign ourselves to the outward rule of Fate and to recognise that the non-human world is unworthy of our worship, it becomes possible at last so to transform and refashion the unconscious universe, so to transmute it in the crucible of the imagination, that a new image of shining gold replaces the old idol of clay. In all the multiform facts of the world—in the visual shapes of trees and mountains and clouds, in the events of the life of man, even in the very omnipotence of Death—the insight of creative idealism can find the reflection of a beauty which its own thoughts first made. In this way mind asserts its subtle mastery over the thoughtless forces of Nature. The more evil the material with which it deals, the more thwarting to untrained desire, the greater is its achievement in inducing the reluctant rock to yield up its hidden treasures, the prouder its victory in compelling the opposing forces to swell the pageant of its triumph. Of all the arts, Tragedy is the proudest, the most triumphant; for it builds its shining citadel in the very centre of the enemy's country, on the very summit of his highest mountain; from its impregnable watch-towers, his camps and arsenals, his columns and forts, are all revealed; within its walls the free life continues, while the legions of Death and Pain and Despair, and all the servile captains of tyrant Fate, afford the burghers of that dauntless city new spectacles of beauty. Happy those sacred ramparts, thrice happy the dwellers on that all-seeing eminence. Honour to those brave warriors who, through countless ages of warfare, have preserved for us the priceless heritage of liberty, and have kept undefiled by sacrilegious invaders the home of the unsubdued.

But the beauty of Tragedy does but make visible a quality which, in more or less obvious shapes, is present always and everywhere in life. In the spectacle of Death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocableness of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of the vastness, the depth, the inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which, as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow. In these moments of insight, we lose all eagerness of temporary desire, all struggling and striving for petty ends, all care for the little



trivial things that, to a superficial view, make up the common life of day by day; we see, surrounding the narrow raft illumined by the flickering light of human comradeship, the dark ocean on whose rolling waves we toss for a brief hour; from the great night without, a chill blast breaks in upon our refuge; all the loneliness of humanity amid hostile forces is concentrated upon the individual soul, which must struggle alone, with what of courage it can command, against the whole weight of a universe that cares nothing for its hopes and fears. Victory, in this struggle with the powers of darkness, is the true baptism into the glorious company of heroes, the true initiation into the overmastering beauty of human existence. From that awful encounter of the soul with the outer world, renunciation, wisdom, and charity are born; and with their birth a new life begins. To take into the inmost shrine of the soul the irresistible forces whose puppets we seem to be—Death and change, the irrevocableness of the past, and the powerlessness of man before the blind hurry of the universe from vanity to vanity—to feel these things and know them is to conquer them.

This is the reason why the Past has such magical power. The beauty of its motionless and silent pictures is like the enchanted purity of late autumn, when the leaves, though one breath would make them fall, still glow against the sky in golden glory. The Past does not change or strive; like Duncan, after life's fitful fever it sleeps well; what was eager and grasping, what was petty and transitory, has faded away; the things that were beautiful and eternal shine out of it like stars in the night. Its beauty, to a soul not worthy of it, is unendurable; but to a soul which has conquered Fate it is the key of religion.

The life of Man, viewed outwardly, is but a small thing in comparison with the forces of Nature. The slave is doomed to worship Time and Fate and Death, because they are greater than anything he finds in himself, and because all his thoughts are of things which they devour. But, great as they are, to think of them greatly, to feel their passionless splendor, is greater still. And such thought makes us free men; we no longer bow before the inevitable in Oriental subjection, but we absorb it, and make it a part of ourselves. To abandon the struggle for private happiness, to expel all eagerness of temporary desire, to burn with passion for eternal things—this is emancipation, and this is the free man's worship. And this liberation is effected by a contemplation of Fate; for Fate itself is subdued by the mind which leaves nothing to be purged by the purifying fire of Time.

United with his fellow-men by the strongest of all ties, the tie of a common doom, the free man finds that a new vision is with him always, shedding over every daily task the light of love. The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long. One by one, as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death. Very brief is the time in which we

can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided. Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never-tiring affection, to strengthen failing courage, to instil faith in hours of despair. Let us not weigh in grudging scales their merits and demerits, but let us think only of their need—of the sorrows, the difficulties perhaps the blindnesses, that make the misery of their lives; let us remember that they are fellow-sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves. And so, when their day is over, when their good and their evil have become eternal by the immortality of the past, be it ours to feel that, where they suffered, where they failed, no deed of ours was the cause; but wherever a spark of the divine fire kindled in their hearts, we were ready with encouragement, with sympathy, with brave words in which high courage glowed.

Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious Power.

## KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

*John Henry Newman (1852)*

PEOPLE say to me that it is but a dream to suppose that Christianity should regain the organic power in human society which once it possessed. I cannot help that; I never said it could. I am not a politician; I am proposing no measures, but exposing a fallacy, and resisting a pretence. Let Benthamism reign, if men have no aspirations; but do not tell them to be romantic, and then solace them with glory; do not attempt by philosophy what once was done by religion. The ascendancy of Faith may be impracticable, but the reign of Knowledge is incomprehensible. The problem for statesmen of this age is how to educate the masses, and literature and science cannot give the solution.

Not so deems Sir Robert Peel; his firm belief and hope is "that an increased sagacity will administer to an exalted faith; that it will make men not merely believe in the cold doctrines of Natural Religion, but that it will so prepare

and temper the spirit and understanding that they will be better qualified to comprehend the great scheme of human redemption." He certainly thinks that scientific pursuits have some considerable power of impressing religion upon the mind of the multitude. I think not, and will now say why.

Science gives us the grounds of premises from which religious truths are to be inferred; but it does not set about inferring them, much less does it reach the inference;—that is not its province. It brings before us phenomena, and it leaves us, if we will, to call them works of design, wisdom, or benevolence; and further still, if we will, to proceed to confess an Intelligent Creator. We have to take its facts, and to give them a meaning, and to draw our own conclusions from them. First comes Knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief. This is why Science has so little of a religious tendency; deductions have no power of persuasion. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma: no man will be a martyr for a conclusion. A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which *is*, but which *we are* "*certain about*"; and it has often been observed that we never say we are certain without implying that we doubt. To say that a thing *must* be, is to admit that it *may not* be. No one, I say, will die for his own calculations; he dies for realities. This is why a literary religion is so little to be depended upon; it looks well in fair weather, but its doctrines are opinions, and, when called to suffer for them, it slips them between its folios, or burns them at its hearth. And this again is the secret of the distrust and raillery with which moralists have been so commonly visited. They say and do not. Why? Because they are contemplating the fitness of things, and they live by the square, when they should be realizing their high maxims in the concrete. Now Sir Robert thinks better of natural history, chemistry, and astronomy than of such ethics; but they too, what are they more than divinity *in posse*? He protests against "controversial divinity": is *inferential* much better?

I have no confidence, then, in philosophers who cannot help being religious, and are Christians by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities. They have worked out by a calculation the lie of a country which they never saw, and mapped it by means of a gazetteer; and like blind men, though they can put a stranger on his way, they cannot walk straight themselves, and do not feel it quite their business to walk at all.

Logic makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism. Tell men to gain notions of a Creator from His works, and, if they were to set about it (which nobody does), they would be jaded and wearied by the labyrinth they were tracing. Their minds would be gorged and surfeited by the logical

operation. Logicians are more set upon concluding rightly than on right conclusions. They cannot see the end for the process. Few men have that power of mind which may hold fast and firmly a variety of thoughts. We ridicule "men of one idea"; but a great many of us are born to be such, and we should be happier if we knew it. To most men argument makes the point in hand only more doubtful, and considerably less impressive. After all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal. He is influenced by what is direct and precise. It is very well to freshen our impressions and convictions from physics, but to create them we must go elsewhere. Sir Robert Peel "never can think it possible that a mind can be so constituted that, after being familiarized with the wonderful discoveries which have been made in every part of experimental science, it can retire from such contemplations without more enlarged conceptions of God's providence and a higher reverence for His name." If he speaks of religious minds, he perpetrates a truism; if of irreligious, he insinuates a paradox.

Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking further and further, and finding "in the lowest depth a lower deep," till you come to the broad bosom of skepticism. I would rather be bound to defend the reasonableness of assuming that Christianity is true than to demonstrate a moral governance from the physical world. Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.

Let no one suppose that in saying this I am maintaining that all proofs are equally difficult, and all propositions equally debatable. Some assumptions are greater than others, and some doctrines involve postulates larger than others and more numerous. I only say that impressions lead to action, and that reasonings lead from it. Knowledge of premises, and inferences upon them,—this is not to *live*. It is very well as a matter of liberal curiosity and of philosophy to analyze our modes of thought; but let this come second, and when there is leisure for it, and then our examinations will in many ways even be subservient to action. But if we commence with scientific knowledge and argumentative proof, or lay any great stress upon it as the basis of personal Christianity, or attempt to make man moral and religious by Libraries and Museums, let us in consistency take chemists for our cooks, and mineralogists for our masons.

Now I wish to state all this as matter of fact, to be judged by the candid testimony of any persons whatever. Why we are so constituted that Faith, not Knowledge or Argument, is our principle of action, is a question with which I have nothing to do; but I think it is a fact, and if it be such, we must resign ourselves to it as best we may, unless we take refuge in the intolerable

paradox that the mass of men are created for nothing, and are meant to leave life as they entered it. So well has this practically been understood in all ages of the world, that no Religion has yet been a Religion of physics or of philosophy. It has ever been synonymous with Revelation. It never has been a deduction from what we know: it has ever been an assertion of what we are to believe. It has never lived in a conclusion; it has ever been a message, or a history, or a vision. No legislator or priest ever dreamed of educating our moral nature by science or by argument. There is no difference here between true religions and pretended. Moses was instructed, not to reason from the creation, but to work miracles. Christianity is a history, supernatural and almost scenic; it tells us what its Author is, by telling us what He has done. . . .

When Sir Robert Peel assures us from the Town Hall at Tamworth that physical science must lead to religion, it is no bad compliment to him to say that he is unreal. He speaks of what he knows nothing about. To a religious man like him, Science has ever suggested religious thoughts; he colours the phenomena of physics with the hues of his own mind, and mistakes an interpretation for a deduction. "I am sanguine enough to believe," he says, "that that superior sagacity which is most conversant with the course and constitution of Nature will be first to turn a deaf ear to objections and presumptions against revealed religion, and to acknowledge the harmony of the Christian dispensation with all that reason, assisted by revelation, tells us of the course and constitution of Nature." Now, considering that we are all of us educated as Christians from infancy, it is not easy to decide at this day whether science creates faith, or only confirms it; but we have this remarkable fact in the history of heathen Greece against the former supposition, that her most eminent empirical philosophers were atheists, and that it was their atheism which was the cause of their eminence. "The natural philosophies of Democritus and others," says Lord Bacon, "*who allow no God or mind in the frame of things, but attribute the structure of the universe to infinite essays and trials of nature, or what they call fate or fortune, and assigned the causes of particular things to the necessity of matter, without any intermixture of final causes, seem, as far as we can judge from the remains of their philosophy, much more solid, and to have gone deeper into nature, with regard to physical causes, than the philosophies of Aristotle or Plato: and this only because they never meddled with final causes, which the others were perpetually inculcating.*"

Lord Bacon gives both the fact and the reason for it. Physical philosophers are ever inquiring *whence* things are, not *why*; referring them to nature, not to mind; and thus they tend to make a system a substitute for a God. Each pursuit or calling has its own dangers, and each numbers among its professors men who rise superior to them. As the soldier is tempted to dissipation, and the merchant to acquisitiveness, and the lawyer to the sophistical, and the statesman to the expedient, and the country clergyman to ease and comfort, yet there are good clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants,

and soldiers, notwithstanding; so there are religious experimentalists, though physics, taken by themselves, tend to infidelity; but to have recourse to physics to *make* men religious is like recommending a canonry as a cure for the gout, or giving a youngster a commission as a penance for irregularities.

The whole framework of Nature is confessedly a tissue of antecedents and consequents; we may refer all things forwards to design, or backwards on a physical cause. La Place is said to have considered he had a formula which solved all the motions of the solar system; shall we say that those motions came from this formula or from a Divine Fiat? Shall we have recourse for our theory to physics or to theology? Shall we assume Matter and its necessary properties to be eternal, or Mind with its divine attributes? Does the sun shine to warm the earth, or is the earth warmed because the sun shines? The one hypothesis will solve the phenomena as well as the other. Say not it is but a puzzle in argument, and that no one ever felt it in fact. So far from it, I believe that the study of Nature, when religious feeling is away, leads the mind, rightly or wrongly, to acquiesce in the atheistic theory, as the simplest and easiest. It is but parallel to that tendency in anatomical studies, which no one will deny, to solve all the phenomena of the human frame into material elements and powers, and to dispense with the soul. To those who are conscious of matter, but not conscious of mind, it seems more rational to refer all things to one origin, such as they know, than to assume the existence of a second origin such as they know not. It is Religion, then, which suggests to Science its true conclusions; the facts come from Knowledge, but the principles come of Faith.

There are two ways, then, of reading Nature—as a machine and as a work. If we come to it with the assumption that it is a creation, we shall study it with awe; if assuming it to be a system, with mere curiosity. . . . The truth is that the system of Nature is just as much connected with religion, where minds are not religious, as a watch or a steam-carriage. The material world, indeed, is infinitely more wonderful than any human contrivance; but wonder is not religion, or we should be worshipping our railroads. What the physical creation presents to us in itself is a piece of machinery, and when men speak of a Divine Intelligence as its Author, this god of theirs is not the Living and True, unless the spring is the god of a watch, or steam the creator of the engine. Their idol, taken at advantage (though it is *not* an idol, for they do not worship it), is the animating principle of a vast and complicated system; it is subjected to laws, and it is connatural and co-extensive with matter. Well does Lord Brougham call it “the great architect of nature”; it is an instinct, or a soul of the world, or a vital power; it is not the Almighty God. . . .

I consider, then, that intrinsically excellent and noble as are scientific pursuits, and worthy of a place in a liberal education, and fruitful in temporal benefits to the community, still they are not, and cannot be, *the instrument* of an ethical training; that physics do not supply the basis, but only materials, for religious sentiment; that knowledge does but occupy, does not form, the

mind; that apprehension of the unseen is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil, educating the multitude, and organizing society; and that, whereas man is born for action, action flows not from inferences, but from impressions,—not from reasonings, but from Faith. . . .

## MY FATHER'S RELIGION

*Clarence Day (1935)*

MY FATHER's ideas of religion seemed straightforward and simple. He had noticed when he was a boy that there were buildings called churches; he had accepted them as a natural part of the surroundings in which he had been born. He would never have invented such things himself. Nevertheless they were here. As he grew up he regarded them as unquestioningly as he did banks. They were substantial old structures, they were respectable, decent, and venerable. They were frequented by the right sort of people. Well, that was enough.

On the other hand he never allowed churches—or banks—to dictate to him. He gave each the respect that was due to it from his point of view; but he also expected from each of them the respect he felt due to him.

As to creeds, he knew nothing about them, and cared nothing either; yet he seemed to know which sect he belonged with. It had to be a sect with the minimum of nonsense about it; no total immersion, no exhorters, no holy confession. He would have been a Unitarian, naturally, if he'd lived in Boston. Since he was a respectable New Yorker, he belonged in the Episcopal Church.

As to living a spiritual life, he never tackled that problem. Some men who accept spiritual beliefs try to live up to them daily: other men, who reject such beliefs, try sometimes to smash them. My father would have disagreed with both kinds entirely. He took a more distant attitude. It disgusted him when atheists attacked religion: he thought they were vulgar. But he also objected to have religion make demands upon him—he felt that religion too was vulgar, when it tried to stir up men's feelings. It had its own proper field of activity, and it was all right there, of course; but there was one place religion should let alone, and that was a man's soul. He especially loathed any talk of walking hand in hand with his Saviour. And if he had ever found the Holy Ghost trying to soften his heart, he would have regarded Its behavior as distinctly uncalled for; even ungentlemanly.

The only religious leader or prophet I can think of who might have suited my father was Confucius—though even Confucius would have struck him as addled. Confucius was an advocate of peace, and of finding the path; and he enjoined the Golden Rule on his followers long before Christ. My father would not have been his follower in any of these. Finding "the path"? Not

even Confucius could have made him see what that meant. He was too busy for that, too hot-tempered for peace, and the Golden Rule he regarded as claptrap; how could things work both ways? Whatever he did unto others he was sure was all right, but that didn't mean that he would have allowed them to do the same things to him. He saw other men as disorderly troops, and himself as a general; and the Golden Rule was plainly too mushy to apply in such circumstances. He disciplined himself quite as firmly as he tried to discipline others, but it wasn't necessarily by any means the same kind of discipline. There was one saying of Confucius', however, with which he would have agreed: "Respect spiritual beings—if there are any—but keep aloof from them." My father would have regarded that principle as thoroughly sound.

When Confucius was asked about the rule to return good for evil, he said: "What then will you return for good? No: return good for good; for evil, return justice." If my father had been asked to return good for evil he would have been even more pithy—his response would have consisted of a hearty and full-throated "Bah!"

If he had been let alone, he would have brought up his sons in this spirit. But my mother's feelings and teachings were different, and this complicated things for us. Like my father, she had accepted religion without any doubts, but she had accepted more of it. She was far more devout. And she loved best the kind of faith that comforted her and sweetened her thoughts. My father didn't object to this at all—it was all right enough—for a woman: but it led to her giving us instructions that battled with his.

They both insisted strongly, for example, on our going to church, but they didn't agree in their reasons. It was the right thing to do, Father said. "But why do we have to go, Father?" "Because I wish to bring you up properly. Men who neglect going to church are a lazy, disreputable lot." A few might be good fellows, he would admit, but they were the exceptions. As a rule, non-churchgoers were not solid, respectable citizens. All respectable citizens owed it to themselves to attend.

My mother put it differently to us. She said we owed it to God. Church to her was a place where you worshiped and learned to be good. My father never dreamed of attending for any such reason. In his moral instructions to us he never once mentioned God. What he dwelt on was integrity. My mother once wrote in my plush-covered autograph album, "Fear God and keep His commandments"; but the motto that Father had written on the preceding page, over his bolder signature, was: "Do your duty and fear no one."

And nobody could tell him his duty—he knew it without that, it seemed. It wasn't written down in any book, certainly not in the Bible, but it was a perfectly definite and indisputable thing nevertheless. It was a code, a tradition. It was to be upright and fearless and honorable, and to brush your clothes properly; and in general always to do the right thing in every depart-



ment of life. The right thing to do for religion was to go to some good church on Sundays. When Father went to church and sat in his pew, he felt he was doing enough. Any further spiritual work ought to be done by the clergy.

When hymns were sung he sometimes joined in mechanically, for the mere sake of singing; but usually he stood as silent as an eagle among canaries and doves, leaving the others to abase themselves in sentiments that he didn't share. The hymns inculcated meekness and submission, and dependence on God; but Father was quick to resent an injury, and he had no meekness in him.

Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is nigh.

How could Father sing that? He had no desire to fly to that bosom.

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life be past;  
Safe into the haven guide.  
Oh, receive my soul at last . . .  
All my trust on Thee is stayed;  
All my help from Thee I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head  
With the shadow of Thy wing.

But Father's head was far from defenseless, and he would have scorned to hide, or ask shelter. As he stood there, looking critically about him, high-spirited, resolute, I could imagine him marching with that same independence through space—a tiny speck masterfully dealing with death and infinity.

When our rector talked of imitating the saints, it seemed drivel to Father. What! imitate persons who gave their whole lives to religion, and took only a perfunctory interest in the affairs of this world? Father regarded himself as a more all-round man than the saints. They had neglected nine-tenths of their duties from his point of view—they had no business connections, no families, they hadn't even paid taxes. In a word, saints were freaks. If a freak spent on abnormal amount of time being religious, what of it?

The clergy were a kind of freaks also. A queer lot. Father liked Bishop Greer and a few others, but he hadn't much respect for the rest of them. He thought of most clergymen as any busy man of action thinks of philosophers, or of those scholars who discuss the fourth dimension, which is beyond human knowing. He regarded the self-alleged intimacy of our rector with that fourth dimension most skeptically. He himself neither was nor wished to be intimate with a thing of that sort. But this didn't mean that he doubted the existence of God. On the contrary, God and Father had somehow contrived to achieve a serene and harmonious relation that the clergy themselves might have envied.

How did Father think God felt towards my mother? Why, about the way he did. God probably knew she had faults, but He saw she was lovely and good; and—in spite of some mistaken ideas that she had about money—He doubtless looked on her most affectionately. Father didn't expect God to regard *him* affectionately—they stood up man to man—but naturally God loved my mother, as everyone must. At the gate of Heaven, if there was any misunderstanding about his own ticket, Father counted on Mother to get him in. That was her affair.

This idea runs far back, or down, into old human thoughts. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife." (First Corinthians, vii, 14.) Medical missionaries report that today, in some primitive tribes, a healthy woman will propose to swallow medicine in behalf of her sick husband. This plan seems to her husband quite reasonable. It seemed so—in religion—to Father.

As to his mental picture of God, I suppose that Father was vague, but in a general way he seemed to envisage a God in his own image. A God who had small use for emotionalism and who prized strength and dignity. A God who probably found the clergy as hard to bear as did Father himself. In short, Father and God, as I said, usually saw eye to eye. They seldom met, or even sought a meeting, their spheres were so different; but they had perfect confidence in each other—at least at most moments. The only exceptions were when God seemed to be neglecting His job—Father's confidence in Him was then withdrawn, instantly. But I'll come to this later.

As to the nature of God's sphere, namely Heaven, compared to Father's, the earth, Heaven wasn't nearly so solid and substantial. Father had all the best of it. Life here on earth was trying, but it shouldn't be—it was all right intrinsically—he felt it was only people's damned carelessness that upset things so much. Heaven, on the other hand, had a more serious and fundamental defect: the whole place was thin and peculiar. It didn't inspire much confidence. Father saw glumly that the time would come when he'd have to go there, but he didn't at all relish the prospect. He clung to his own battered realm.

Yet its faults and stupidities weighed on his spirit at times; all the chuckle-headed talk and rascality in business and politics. He was always getting indignant about them, and demanding that they be stamped out; and when he saw them continually spreading everywhere, it was maddening. Nature too, though in general sound and wholesome, had a treacherous streak. He hated and resented decay and failing powers. He hated to see little children or animals suffer. His own aches and pains were an outrage; he faced them with anger. And aside from these treacheries, there was a spirit of rebellion in things. He would come in from a walk over his fields—which to me had seemed pleasant—oppressed by the balky disposition both of his field and his farmer. He would get up from an inspection of his account books with the same irritation: there were always some bonds in his box that hadn't

behaved as they should. And twice a day, regularly, he would have a collision, or bout, with the newspaper: it was hard to see why God had made so many damned fools and Democrats.

I would try to persuade him sometimes—in my argumentative years—that it would be better for him to accept the world as it was and adapt himself to it, since he could scarcely expect to make the planet over and change the whole earth single-handed. Father listened to this talk with suspicion, as to an *advocatus diaboli*. If he ever was tempted to give in, it was only in his weak moments; a minute later he was again on the war-path, like a materialistic Don Quixote.

There was one kind of depression that afflicted Mother which Father was free from: he never once had any moments of feeling “unworthy.” This was a puzzle to Mother, and it made her look at Father with a mixture of awe and annoyance. Other people went to church to be made better, she told him. Why didn’t he? He replied in astonishment that he had no need to be better—he was all right as he was. Mother couldn’t get over his taking this stand, but she never could get him to see what the matter was with it. It wasn’t at all easy for Father to see that he had any faults; and if he did, it didn’t even occur to him to ask God to forgive them. He forgave them himself. In his moments of prayer, when he and God tried to commune with each other, it wasn’t his own shortcomings that were brought on the carpet, but God’s.

He expected a good deal of God, apparently. Not that he wanted God’s help, of course; or far less His guidance. No, but it seemed that God—like the rest of us—spoiled Father’s plans. He, Father, was always trying to bring this or that good thing to pass, only to find that there were obstacles in the way. These of course roused his wrath. He would call God’s attention to such things. They should not have been there. He didn’t actually accuse God of gross inefficiency, but when he prayed his tone was loud and angry, like that of a dissatisfied guest in a carelessly managed hotel.

I never saw Father kneel in supplication on such occasions. On the contrary he usually talked with God lying in bed. My room was just above Father’s, and he could easily be heard through the floor. On those rare nights when he failed to sleep well, the sound of “damns” would float up—at first deep and tragic and low, then more loud and exasperated. Fragments of thoughts and strong feelings came next, or meditations on current bothers. At the peak of these, God would be summoned. I would hear him call “Oh, God!” over and over, with a rising inflection, as though he were demanding that God should present himself instantly, and sit in the fat green chair in the corner, and be duly admonished. Then when Father seemed to feel that God was listening, he would begin to expostulate. He would moan in a discouraged but strong voice: “Oh, God, it’s too much. Amen. . . . I say it’s too damned much . . . No, no, I can’t stand it. Amen.” After a pause, if he didn’t feel better, he would seem to suspect that God might be trying to sneak back to Heaven without doing anything, and I would hear him shout warningly:

"Oh, God! I *won't* stand it! Amen. Oh, damnation! A-a-men." Sometimes he would ferociously bark a few extra "Amens," and then, soothed and satisfied, peacefully go back to sleep . . . And one night in the country, when the caretaker of our house in town telephoned to Father that the rain was pouring in through a hole in the roof, I heard so much noise that I got out of bed and looked over the banisters, and saw Father standing alone in the hall, shaking his fist at the ceiling, and shouting in hot indignation to Heaven, "What next?"

But Father was patient with God after all. If he didn't forgive, he forgot. His wrath didn't last—he had other things to think of—and he was genial at heart. The very next Sunday after an outburst he would be back in church. Not perhaps as a worshiper or a devotee, but at least as a patron.

## MR. ONION

*Dana Burnet (1926)*

It was when she went to turn out the light back of the sofa that Marian discovered Mr. Onion perched on top of the bookshelves. Dressed in his perennial clown's costume, and holding in his hands the ladder that was an integral part of his character, he stood patiently grinning down at her. His grin was ludicrous. It was also faintly pathetic, as every true clown's grin should be.

Marian thought: Jackie must have climbed up on the sofa last night before he went to bed and put Mr. Onion on top of the bookshelves. . . . Funny that I never noticed him there. . . . But I was so busy with things . . . people. . . . Good Lord! What a party! They must have had a good time. . . . They stayed till daylight. . . . But our crowd always has a good time. . . .

"I'll take Mr. Onion back to the nursery; Jackie adores him. . . . He cares more for that clown than for all his other toys put together. . . ."

But when she reached for the little wooden figure a weakness seized her. She began to laugh hysterically. She was so very tired and Mr. Onion was so very absurd. So unalterably absurd. . . . And so pathetic. . . . It was the way his painted mouth turned up at the corners. . . .

She sank down on the sofa, shaking with uncontrollable laughter. John came stumbling in from their bedroom. His coat was off, and his tie dangled like a wilted purple flag from his loosened collar.

"Matter, old girl?"

"Look! F-funny. . . ."

"Oh, Mr. Onion?"

"Y-e-e-s!"

"But what's funny? Where's the joke?"

"I—don't—know. I think it's his grin. . . . No, it's the l-ladder," gasped Marian helplessly. "Why must he always carry a ladder? It's so p-pointless."

"Everything's pointless at five o'clock in the morning," grumbled John, yawning. "Come to bed, Marian. You're worn out. So am I. The damned party lasted too long," he added, with sudden irritability.

"To think of Mr. Onion's standing up there all night watching us!" said Marian, sighing. "I wonder what he thought of us."

"Sick of parties," said John. "Come to bed—"

But somehow they didn't go to bed just then. The great rush of sunrise across the sea and up the hill and through the windows of their cottage may have struck them all at once as something too precious to be wasted. Or possibly they were still a trifle dizzy from the effects of their own hospitality and wanted to cool their heads in the fresh morning air; or possibly they were just too exhausted to do anything very definite. . . .

They drifted out of doors and sat down on the rustic bench that stood at the edge of the hill, facing the sea. . . . Marian, in her crumpled evening dress, with her hair curling flatly about her pretty, tired face, with something rather strange and crumpled in her eyes, was a mildly fascinating figure to John, her husband. They had been married six years, he reflected remotely. Nice to know that Marian could still turn into a woman he never had seen before.

But was there, perhaps, a chance, a slight chance, that some day she might turn into a complete—and permanent—stranger? He had watched her last night dancing with Tom Nevinson. Nevinson was keen on Marian. He had fallen for her in the frankly casual way that men these days fell for other men's wives. It was a case according to the modern code. Also according to the modern code John Thurston was forbidden the old-fashioned emotion of jealousy. . . . Besides, wasn't he himself more or less engaged in making love to Sally Nevinson, Tom's pert, blond wife? Nevertheless, he recalled, if not with jealousy, at least with amazement, the difference in Marian when she danced or joked or flirted with Tom. For of course she did flirt. All nice women flirted nowadays. . . . Well, what of it? They always had. . . . Only not so openly.

"I wonder what Mr. Onion *does* think of us."

"What's on your mind, sweetheart?"

But she didn't answer directly, and his own mind floated off and away like a bit of cloud—like that fleecy cloud being driven into the sunrise by the light western breeze. It would be a fine, fair day, said his high-sailing mind. . . .

He wanted vaguely to ask Marian a question—something that would involve and bring to an issue all the unasked and unanswered questions between them. But the only thing he could think of was: Where did Mr. Onion come from?

He couldn't remember, at the moment, who had given Jackie that ridiculous clown. His lapse of memory annoyed him. It invested Mr. Onion with a certain mystery; with a certain importance.

Oh, nonsense! Why not ask Marian? Of course she would know. She could recite offhand the origin and history of any of Jackie's toys. But he wouldn't ask her. He wouldn't be so silly. As though there could be any mystery about a child's plaything!

"By the way, Marian, whoever gave Jackie that darned clown?"

"I don't know," answered his wife absently.

"What? You must know!"

"Well, I don't. We were never able to find out. . . . Don't you remember? He just turned up that Christmas, and we never knew who sent him. We never found the card. I made quite an effort, too—asked everyone I could think of—because Jackie adored him so. But I never found out. . . ."

"Uh-huh," said John.

"It was Jackie who named him," added Marian, with a sleepy, reminiscent smile. . . . She could hear, by some mental process that was more than memory, little Jackie's grave, childish voice murmuring in her ears, drumming at her heart. . . . "The clown's name is Mr. Onion. He has a funny name because clowns are funny people. And he has a ladder because he likes it. He can do tricks on it if he wants to. But he'd rather just carry it. It makes him feel like he was going to climb something."

Marian smiled, thinking of Jackie still asleep in his safe, white bed, in the wing of the cottage which they had built five years before when he was born. Safe bed, safe house, safe beautiful country. . . . The Maine shore in August. . . . No place on earth more perfect for a child!

All safe! Yet, curiously, deep down in her tired body, in her brooding mind, she was aware of a blankness, a shadow that was almost fear. Life, in its essence, was so fragile. . . . And there was so much of it that was mere doubt and dream and nebulous, swiftly changing chemical reaction. . . .

"We have no God," she said abruptly, but very simply, as though uttering a familiar and commonplace thought.

John stirred beside her. He uncrossed and stretched his long flannel-clad legs. "And what," he asked, "would we be doing with a God if we had one?"

"Oh, I don't know. Pray to Him. . . . Depend on Him. . . . Have Him in for tea—and conversation."

"You've been looking at the sun. It's made you religious," he said.

"The sun's too impersonal," replied Marian. "Sometimes when you want it most it goes under a cloud. . . . I'd rather like a God," she continued murmurously, "who would always be on hand in case of—of emergency."

John twisted about, with an effort, to look at her.

"Are you serious, old girl?"

"Serious? Yes, I think so."

"How come? What's the big idea? We've got along all right so far without any particular household deity."

"Have we?" breathed Marian.

"Well, haven't we?" he countered.

"I don't know," she said again slowly. "I wonder—I can't help wondering whether we, whether people like us—our generation—are as successful at living as we like to think we are. We pretend to a good deal of—advancement, Progress. . . . But I'm not so sure. We've dragged out a lot of the old bugaboos and made faces at them. We've learned to admit that we have bodies, and we've organized a parade of the senses—with Papa Freud as drum major. We've abolished vice by the simple process of making a virtue of it. And maybe these things help. They're a kind of oil—banana oil—that we keep pouring out to smooth over the surface! But there's something volcanic at the center. I feel it—so often! A kind of restlessness, an uncertainty, as though we were living over a storm that might break at any moment—"

"Don't," said John placidly. "What's the use?"

"You feel it too!"

"Well—yes—in a way. Who doesn't? But—no good expecting things to happen. Besides, what can happen to us? I mean, barring some accident."

"That's just it. Accidents do happen. Oh, why not admit that it's all accident? And—the trouble with us is that we've never been *through* anything. We don't know our own strength or our own weakness—"

"Oh, well," interrupted John, "we've got—anyway—a philosophy. A kind of philosophy. At least I have." He glanced at her rather defiantly, but she was staring at the golden east, at the infinite cobalt sea. "I believe in myself, in my own vitality—"

"Yes, dear, I know." This was the modern credo. She had heard it so many times before.

"Vitality's the only virtue. Be a good animal! Take Jackie, for instance. People are always harping on what a healthy kid he is—as though that were some sort of accident. It makes me sore! Why shouldn't he be healthy?" demanded Jackie's father. "You and I are healthy, decent people. He's our child. There's a kind of reason in it, a kind of logic."

"But life so frequently isn't logical," objected Marian in a voice as distant as her gaze. "There's so often a gap, a vacancy, a lost link in the chain—"

"I don't feel that. I have my work, you know." He was a trifle stiff with fatigue.

"Does it satisfy you? Does your painting really satisfy you?"

"If it didn't, why would I go on with it?"

"Why not? One has to do something. . . . I've suspected, at times, that it was simply a salve to your conscience, an excuse for loafing," she said with a frankness born, perhaps, of sheer physical exhaustion.

"I see," grunted John. Then he laughed shortly. "Hell! as long as we're

telling our real names this morning, I'd like to know—if you don't mind—just how much that bird Nevinson means in your young life?"

"Tom?" Her voice was a languid note in the increasing breeze. "Does Tom strike you as being—important?"

"Not as a person, perhaps. But as a symptom—"

"Yes, I grant you that. Tom may be a symptom. . . . Of what, I wonder? Because I really don't know. I'm not a promiscuous sort of woman, am I? Do you think I am?"

"I hope not," answered her husband.

"Why do I bother with Tom at all? Why do you bother with Sally?"

"Oh, Sally. . . ." mumbled John.

"You kissed her last night. I saw you. . . . When you were dancing on the porch. Tom hasn't kissed me—yet. Not really. But he will. It's coming to that. I suppose I'm a fool to tell you this, but I do so want to know why. . . . Because we—you and I—actually care a lot about each other, don't we, John dear?"

"Why, sure, a lot! A whole lot! Sure, we do." He was awkward and boyish in his desire to be emphatic. He put his hand on her arm. "Let's chuck it," he said. "Let's not play this silly game any more. You're right about my work. It is an excuse. But I was thinking . . . if I could get away, go somewhere . . . to Paris, maybe. We've got money enough to do what we please. Let's pull up stakes and beat it—"

She shook briefly her small, dark head.

"Paris is only another place. 'The fault, dear Brutus' . . ." The rest of the quotation was lost in the wind. "You'd find the same silly game in Paris, or wherever you decided to go. . . . Only it isn't silly. It's desperately serious. . . . The trouble is at the center. . . . What we lack is a faith—some faith—in something—beyond ourselves." Her speech was broken into staccato bits, and the spaces were filled by the rustling of leaves, by the muffled drumbeat of the surf on the beach a quarter of a mile away. "That's why we go looking into other people. . . . Always prying into other people, hoping, hoping to find the prophet of some true God. . . ."

"You'll find no prophet in Tom Nevinson," growled John.

"Perhaps not. But I'll go on looking just the same. I must look! Don't you see? I can't afford not to. I might be cheated out of some miracle. If only I could find that miracle in you," she said quietly, and turned toward him her strange, searching, weary eyes.

He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"No," he said. "I won't pose. I won't play prophet or promise miracles even to make you happy. I'm not up to hair shirt and a diet of locusts. If you can't be satisfied with a plain man who—oh, hell!" he broke off sharply. "Let's quit this. We're getting in too deep. It's just because we're so darned tired. What are we sitting out here for, anyway? Let's go in—have some breakfast—go to bed."



Miss Mosby, little Jackie's nurse, appeared in her chaste white as they sat dispiritedly at breakfast on the screened dining porch.

"Jackie has a little cold this morning," said Miss Mosby.

"Don't let him go into the ocean, then," cautioned Marian.

"Very well, Mrs. Thurston."

"How much of a cold?" asked John, stifling a yawn.

"His nose is running," announced Miss Mosby, smoothing her prophylactic apron.

"Maybe he oughtn't to go to the beach at all," worried Marian.

"Oh, nonsense!" said her husband. "Beautiful, warm day like this. Do him good to be down there in the sunshine. . . . I'll have a look at him."

He got up and went into Jackie's room.

"Hello, Big Boy! Hear you got the snuffles."

"But not a cold," quickly replied Jackie, sitting up in bed.

"Well, I don't know. How do you feel?"

"Fine, Daddy! I don't feel sick at all. I guess I can go to the beach all right," added Jackie, and squirmed uneasily as his father seemed to deliberate. "I guess it would do me a lot of good to go to the beach, all right!"

"Beautiful day," thought John. What could happen to a healthy kid on a day like this? Well, for the love of Pete, what did he *think* was going to happen? "My nerves are shot," he decided, "staying up all night, drinking. . . . I'm jumpy. And, then, that queer talk with Marian! What was it she'd said about life being so uncertain, so—fragile—?"

"Why, sure," he decided finally. "The beach—sure! Only, I wouldn't go in bathing to-day, if I were you, Big Boy. No ocean, eh? But the beach—fine! Keep out in the air; keep out in the sunshine. Do you more good than a lot of foolish medicine."

So Jackie went to the beach that morning as usual. John and Marian slept till one o'clock. Then John, after luncheon, drove off in the car to keep a tennis engagement. "Promised Sally last night I'd play doubles. . . ."

Marian shouted after him some casual sporting benediction. She was in her room, dressing. She herself had a date that afternoon with Tom. He would arrive shortly in *his* car, and they would drive out to the rocks at Devil's Cove. . . . She laughed suddenly at the patent absurdity of this exchange, this almost formal, almost mechanical transfer of interests. Her husband rushing off to play with Sally, and Sally's husband rushing off to play with her! How unutterably childish! Yet all the time she was making herself as attractive as possible, putting on her smartest sport skirt, her gayest colored sweater, her most fetching hat—the yellow straw with the sprig of artificial wheat aslant the crown. . . .

Tom Nevinston arrived: a solid, rather boisterous young gallant in white flannels and a tweed jacket, who smoked an incongruous, delicate-looking briar pipe.

She listened all the way to Devil's Cove to his breezy protestations of passion. He was not (he said) the sort of poor fish who went around making love to every woman he met. Not much! Of course in his college days (this with a sigh) he'd been—well, the usual sort of indiscriminate young fool. But he'd learned by bitter experience the value of true emotion. *And* of course he cared a lot for Sally, just as she, Marian, cared a lot about John. . . . Why, sure? He understood all that. But life was so short and, er—it was all such a queer jumble, that—well—it seemed just a darned shame not to be honest and speak out when you met someone who really meant something to you.

"But that's such an obvious sort of truth," said Marian. "Such an old truth! And—forgive me—such an unsubstantial one. I want something more from you, Tom."

"Something more?" He was puzzled, curious, wondering whether he dared assume that she was deliberately tempting him. . . .

"Yes. You don't happen to have any sort of *divine* truth concealed about your person, do you?"

"Any sort of what? Divine truth? Are you kidding me, my beautiful?"

"I am not."

"Well, then, I don't get you."

"All right," said Marian serenely.

"My dear girl—"

She stopped him with a quick dart of her hand toward his arm.

"Take me home, Tom."

"Not yet, Marian! Don't spoil things. This is our day, our moment—"

He drew her to him. The delicate-looking pipe was removed, with a gesture, from his lips. . . . He kissed her, and she made no protest. She made no comment whatsoever.

She simply got up and started toward the car. He followed her.

"Marian dearest—"

"I must get home, Tom. You've got to take me. Something's happening! Something dreadful's happening— And please—drive fast!"

But when she got home she found that her fear—the black fear that had seized her so unreasonably—was without justification in fact. Miss Mosby, to be sure, reported that Jackie had a little fever.

Marian nodded and went into the nursery.

"Well, Jackie boy, how do you feel?"

"Fine, Mother."

"You must keep covered up. . . . You'll be all right to-morrow. . . . Do you know who's in the living room?"

"Mr. Nevinson," guessed Jackie, with devastating promptness.

"Yes, he is. . . . But I mean—I meant someone else. A friend of yours!"

"I don't know."

"Mr. Onion! He's standing up on top of the bookshelves—"

"Oh, yes," said Jackie. "He likes it up there."

"But—shan't I bring him to you?"

"No matter. Because Mr. Onion has to stay there for a special reason. Because if any giants or dragons come in he can see them and then he can climb down and hit them with his ladder and they'll be dead."

"Darling! Where do you get these extraordinary ideas—!"

"There's a dragon 'at lives under the house. Mr. Onion saw him, and he was all black, like when you shut your eyes tight, and Mr. Onion says he might come down the chimney—"

"Jackie! Listen to Mother! There *aren't* any giants or dragons—" blundered Marian; but she was not so sure. Jackie's faintly superior smile made her doubt the rationalistic hypothesis. . . . She leaned down and kissed him. "Blessed baby!" she murmured; and again was strangely humbled by his smile.

Returning to the living-room, she found not only Tom but also Sally and John and several others—all members of the crowd—gathered for cocktails. John was doing the honors. As she came in she caught his eye, and for an instant he stood rigid, with the cocktail shaker poised like a gleaming piston at the top of its stroke. "Anything wrong?" his raised eyebrows telegraphed her. She didn't answer. She couldn't. The moment dragged out and grew thin—grew taut as a stretched fiddle string.

The others felt this tension. Sally Nevinson had been kidding Tom about the extravagant tie he'd put on for his date with Marian. "I can always tell when Tom's hard hit. . . . His tie gives him away. . . . It's an emotional barometer. . . ." But suddenly her shrill voice broke. . . . She whirled and stared at Marian. "Good Lord!" she flung out. "What's the matter? You look as though you'd been seeing things!"

"I have," said Marian.

John stepped forward quickly. "What is it?" he asked.

"It's a dragon that lives under the house," replied Marian, and laughed. "Jackie's been telling me about it. . . . Give me a drink, will you, John dear? I need it for my nerves. . . . You see, I'm scared of the dragon."

Her laugh somehow destroyed the charm of the cocktail hour. People drifted away. . . . John and Marian were left alone. "Tell me," he said.

"There's nothing to tell."

"Yes, there is. You know there is! Is it Tom? Is it Sally? Is it—Jackie?"

She shook her head.

"It's nothing I can put into words. It's just a feeling. A dragon under the house—"

"What's all this nonsense about a dragon?"

"It's black," said Marian.

"Gosh!" he muttered. "You're getting beyond me, old girl! I can't make you out half the time—"

"Then ask Mr. Onion!" cried Marian, pointing to the little figure on the bookshelves. "He understands—"

"What you need is sleep," decided John. "We'll cut out that dance at the country club to-night. Go to bed early. Get a good night's rest—"

It was well that they did go to bed early that night, for at three o'clock in the morning Miss Mosby woke them to say that Jackie was very ill. He had a temperature of 103 and was breathing hard. He was also coughing a good deal.

"I've already telephoned for the doctor," said the efficient Miss Mosby as Marian struggled into kimono and bedroom slippers. To John, plunging in from the sleeping porch, she said, "You had better put on your heavy dressing gown, Mr. Thurston. There's a chill in the air this morning."

A chill in the air, thought Marian. A dragon under the house. . . . So many things that can't be put into words. . . .

Then it all came down to one word; to one dreadful, ominous word that was like a weight on your heart:

Pneumonia.

Dr. Moulton, the tall, kindly, capable country doctor who had ministered to Jackie's minor summer ailments since he was born, was the first to utter this word. He said it gravely, simply, as one who knows the impossibility of cheating life with accents and inflections. . . . Later, the next afternoon, it was repeated by a locally famous physician, Dr. Hurd, whom Moulton had summoned from Portland. . . . And from Portland arrived a trained nurse. Miss Mosby hated her on sight. . . .

For three days Jackie's life hung in the balance. Then at noon of the fourth day Dr. Moulton said to Marian, "We're doin' all we can for the boy, Mrs. Thurston. But I must tell you the truth. It looks pretty bad right now. If there's anybody else you'd like to call in—"

"I want the greatest in the country," she said. "There must be some one specialist. . . . Not that I believe he can do any more than they've done. But just because he *is* the greatest. . . ."

John nodded and went to the telephone. For more than an hour he invoked, with the meticulous patience of despair, various distant persons—beings—disembodied voices. Then five minutes of sharp, brisk, businesslike conversation, and the thing was done.

"Dr. Vance," he mumbled to Marian, wiping the sweat from his face, "leaves New York to-night on the *State of Maine*, arrives five-forty tomorrow morning. I mustn't forget to have a car at the station to meet him."

"To-morrow morning may be too late," said Marian, in the queer, hushed voice that had been her voice for the past four days. "If only we had someone here now. . . . If only we had some God to pray to . . ."

Then John cried out, a deep, guttural cry that came from the depths of his tortured soul.

"Well, we haven't! And I refuse to fake one!"

"I would if I could," said Marian. "But I can't. I've tried, and I can't—"

Toward morning they called her. She went into Jackie's room. Dr. Moulton and Dr. Hurd were standing together by the bed. The nurse whom Miss Mosby hated made a pale figure against the wall, and Miss Mosby herself was in the doorway. There was a faint light from the window; a gray hint of dawn. . . .

Marian leaned over her son. Her pose, the maternal brooding of her body, the soft fall of her hands against the mounded bedclothes, served to banish the professional restraint of the sickroom. And when she spoke her simple question seemed somehow to transcend its own scientific futility.

"Jackie darling, when are you going to get well?"

The small figure stirred. It stirred. Then the child's voice came reluctantly—so frail an answer, so light a thread that Marian's heart almost stopped beating.

"I don't know. . . . Mother. . . . You'll have to ask. . . . Mr. Onion. . . ."

She straightened up at once. Miss Mosby, in the doorway, stood aside to let her pass. Miss Mosby thought that Mrs. Thurston was smiling, but she could not be sure. One could not be sure of anything just then.

Marian walked blindly through the silent house to the door of the living-room. There she stopped, aware of some happening that must not be disturbed; aware of something going on in the twilight of the many-windowed room: a sort of birth, a revelation and a renascence that offered high defiance to the pervading thrust of death.

A figure was kneeling before the bookshelves. She knew, of course, that it was John, but the familiar sense of him as flesh and blood was so dimmed by the uncertain light that only his pose mattered. It alone had substance, and that substance was so strange, so blurred with beauty, that she almost cried out. Then she heard his voice and she knew that he was praying.

"Listen, Mr. Onion, don't let him die. Save him, save Jackie. . . . Mr. Onion. . . . He loves you. That makes you alive. He believes in you. That makes you divine. . . . Listen, you've got to! He believes in you. You're his great treasure. You're the wonder of his life. I love him too, but my love isn't enough. . . . Because I've never been more to him than his father. . . . I've never given him magic. . . . I've never given him wonder. . . . Oh, Mr. Onion. . . . Mr. Onion! Oh, God. . . . Save him. . . ."

The strangely articulate, strangely broken voice went on like a groping music that hadn't quite learned to be music. And the light creeping up the hill and warming the windows was like a mute response. . . . Marian turned and ran, sure-footed among shadowy pieces of furniture, among shadowy fears, back to the nursery. The two doctors now were leaning over the bed,

but she paid no attention to them. She too leaned down; she would remember this bending of her body all her life long. . . .

"Jackie! Can you hear me?"

The frail voice replied after an interval, "Yes, Mother."

"Then—listen, darling! I asked—Daddy asked Mr. Onion if you were going to get well, and Mr. Onion said 'Yes.' He said—you were to try very hard and then you'd get well—"

"Mr. Onion said—?"

"That it was all right! That you were going to get well!" There was a moment of absolute stillness. Then Jackie sighed—a faint, far sigh of reassurance, of childish contentment and peace. Then, turning on his side, he nestled down comfortably to sleep.

A moment later Marian heard the crunch of car wheels on the drive outside the house and knew that Dr. Vance, the great specialist, had arrived. But she knew also that he was only another lay figure, another supernumerary in the transpired drama that could not be put into words; that could never be put into words. . . .

Dr. Vance appeared, puffing. He was a little, round, fussy man who waddled in and looked at Jackie, and said, "Ah! Hum! Indeed!" and waddled out again, with John and Marian tagging at his heels.

"I want some breakfast. Angels in heaven, what a train! *What* a train! I want some coffee. With hot milk and no sugar. And three eggs boiled four minutes by the clock. By the clock, mind you! I'm very particular about my eggs."

"Jackie!" blurted out John, with a racked smile. "What about Jackie?"

"Going to get well. Well now. Keep him warm. Keep the windows open. Of *course!* Healthy youngster. Good air. *Bound* to pull through. Ask your doctors. I'm not a doctor. I'm a traveling man. Cost you five hundred dollars. Highway robbery. Can't help it. Must keep people in awe of specialists. Only way to do it is to overcharge them. If you have an old-fashioned coffeepot, I prefer it to the modern percolator. And I like my toast just a little bit burned at the edges. . . ."

An hour later John and Marian were sitting on the bench at the edge of the hill, facing the sea. Their bodies a little apart, their hands not touching, they experienced nevertheless that knowledge of each other, that sense of contact which is marriage rarely realized.

"So I prayed," said John. "I had to. If it was cowardice, then it was cowardice. But I had to."

"I know . . . I heard you. . . . I came to the door while you were kneeling there. . . ."

"Funny thing," he said.

"Beautiful thing," said Marian.

"It was real. That's what I mean. And—it's going to make a difference.

Can't go on living as we have been. . . . Do the same things, maybe. But there'll be a new element in everything. . . . Always a new element. . . . Only I suspect it's old . . . old and—indispensable. The element of search—man searching for the source of his wonder, man searching for his God. . . .”

“That's what I tried to say to you the other day, the other morning.”

“It can't be said,” replied John. “It can never be said. Because there's no guide to the search and no definition for the thing found. There's only the necessity—I felt that last night—for man to go beyond himself, to go beyond reason, even beyond truth, as Jackie's young mind went beyond the truth of Mr. Onion. . . . Mr. Onion can be explained, but Jackie's thought of him can never be explained . . . but somewhere along the path of that thought is the power and the glory. . . .”

“We can never tell anyone,” said Marian. “This is our secret, and this is . . . our wedding day.”

“Happy is the bride the sun shines on,” said John.

## THE LITTLE BLACK BOYS

*Clara Laidlaw (1942)*

THE little black boys, Samuel and Hamuel, were the first, indeed the only Negro children I'd ever had in my classes in Northford. I remember very well the first time I saw them, on Wednesday, the second day of school, when my freshman math class assembled for the first time.

They sidled into the room shyly, after all the white children had rushed in to begin disputing noisily over the choice seats in the back of the room. The black boys hesitated just inside the door, looking around in a bewildered way, and then they slid quickly into two empty front seats. I couldn't help noticing how bent and shriveled and small their bodies were. Obviously they were twins, but even the usual physical retardation of twin children did not explain all their difference from the robust white children. There was hunger in the shallowness of their chests, and their thin, bent shoulders told of hard work beyond their years. When they sat down, the seats were almost ludicrously large for them.

The white children buzzed and tussled until I called them to order, but the little black boys sat like twin statues, their eyes gleaming white as they stared at me, their round, fluted lips sober and still. They had cheap new dime-store tablets before them on their desks, and penny pencils, the dull brown ones with pointed erasers wedged into the tops.

When I asked them, as I had the others, if they wanted to be called by their full names or by nicknames, the frozen stillness of their faces broke for the first time, and the one nearest the blackboard said, his white teeth flashing, “I'm Sammy. He's Hammy.”

Some of the little girls behind him began to giggle. I nodded hurriedly and said, "All right, boys. Sammy and Hammy it shall be," and turned quickly to take up the first lesson.

As the days and weeks went by, I paid little attention to the twins. They were quiet and sober and good. They never whispered to anyone and no one whispered to them. I grew used to seeing their black faces staring blankly up at me, or their kinky black heads bent laboriously over their work. With diminished penny pencils clutched tightly in skinny black fingers, they worked hour after hour to produce grubby papers covered with painfully worked problems, all wrong. The class was a slow one; but of all the group, Sammy and Hammy were the slowest. If, after weeks of work, they became finally convinced that if A and B, working alone, could each do a piece of work in six days, working together they could do it in three, then the next day they would be equally certain that, if one tablet cost ten cents, two would cost five.

I used to find myself scolding them occasionally, and they would look up at me with remorse in their liquid black eyes, their mouths drawn down into a mask of guilty grief.

Once I said, "Oh, Sammy and Hammy, what am I to do with you?" and Hammy said, "We're sorry we's so dumb, Miz Carey." Then he smiled and Sammy smiled, like two bad little dogs trying to be ingratiating. So we were friends again, and I began writing on their papers, to their innocent delight, "This is better than yesterday's paper," or "Fine! You had two problems right today" instead of the bare o's and 20's they really earned.

One day I found a paper of Hammy's from which the comment I had written had been neatly cut.

"We saves them," Hammy said shyly when I questioned him. "Our mammy pastes 'em in a big book we got from the tailor shop. She say—'t ain't every boy gets him so many nice words said to him—least, not every black boy."

"Those twins!" the other teachers groaned. Poor little black boys, they couldn't do anything at all. The other children shunned them, too, it seemed, and their days would have been sad indeed had they not had each other for company. Each day they brought their dinners and sat alone on the steps eating their plain bread from a paper sack, while the other children ate and played noisily in the lunchroom.

Sammy and Hammy would sit watching the antics of their fellows with eager interest and delight, whispering to each other, chuckling companionably at whatever pleased them, but never offering to join the fun. Their apparent contentment in their isolation puzzled me until one day Sammy said, concerning another matter, "Our mammy say—you twins, so you be twins together," and I understood what the mother was doing for them: making the gulf between white and black be their choice, guarding them



thus from fear and from desire for what they couldn't have, making them self-sufficient in their twoness.

Still, their aloofness bothered me. I didn't want to make an issue of it, but when two or three boys or girls would come in to discuss class politics or the play, or to get news for the paper, or just to visit, I'd begin in a round-about way to talk about democracy and the American dream and the Golden Rule, and finally, as offhandedly as I could, by way of illustration, I'd bring in Sammy's and Hammy's need of friends. The boys and girls would say, "Yes, Miss Carey," "Of course, Miss Carey," but the shadow would come down over their faces. They would look secretive and stubborn, and I knew they'd been talked to at home.

In a way, you couldn't blame their parents. The twins lived alone with their mother in an old shack 'way down at the shore. At first the black woman had gone about asking for work for herself and her boys, and she had done washing for a few ladies until it had got around that Cash Benson, the town's ne'er-do-well, had been seen hanging around the shack. Now she and the boys managed to live with no apparent means of support, and lately when the woman came to town, everyone could see that she was visibly big with child. "Cash's nigger woman," the men on the street corners called her, guffawing as she passed. No wonder white parents kept their children from making friends with her boys.

She had gone to the Swedish Baptist Church twice when she had first come to town, taking the boys, stiff and clean in their patched Sunday suits. "I been baptized and bred up pure Baptist," she had told Reverend Swanson proudly, hesitantly accepting his proffered hand as he had bade her good day at the door of the church. Behind her the Swedish Baptist ladies had whispered and stared. The next Sunday, when she and the boys had taken their seats humbly in the last pew, there had begun a rustling as, one by one, some irately, some shamefacedly, the white ladies had risen and left the church. The black woman had stayed for the service, though Sammy and Hammy, watching her face, had begun to cry. She had never come again.

The way things were, there didn't seem much I could do except be especially nice to Sammy and Hammy, and that was hard too, because I certainly couldn't praise their work, and to treat them differently from the others would have antagonized the white children and made things still harder for the twins.

Toward spring it came time to have the annual freshman party. We had a class meeting, and the youngsters decided to charge twenty-five cents a ticket to pay for the lunch, and to have dancing and a program. Miss Carey, of course, was to help with the program. I always got that!

"Mr. President," I said. (We try to teach them to observe parliamentary procedure, heaven help us!) "Mr. President, may I say a word?"

"Keep still, you kids," the class president yelled gallantly. "Miss Carey's got sumpin to tell you."

When approximate quiet had finally been achieved, I said, "The program committee and I are going to need help, so if you can play a musical instrument, or sing, or dance, or recite, or stand on your head—" (Hoots from the class. "Miss Carey made a joke! Listen to her!") "why, come and tell us. We need talent for our program."

Then, before the tumult could get under way again, I added, remembering the time I had missed the eighth grade picnic because my mother had been away visiting, and I had been too proud to borrow from the neighbors, "And another thing—sometimes twenty-five cents is hard to get hold of, so if there's anyone who wants to go to the party but who hasn't the money at the time, why, you just come to me, privately, and we'll see if we can't fix it up."

The next day after school, I was correcting papers when the door opened and the twins sidled in. My heart sank. After all, did it matter what one apple cost if a dozen cost twenty-five cents?

Sammy's black face glistened, and he moistened his lips with a pale tongue. "Us—us—," he whispered.

"We's got each a box," said Hammy quickly from over Sammy's slight shoulder. His eyes rolled toward his brother fearfully. Obviously, it was not what they had intended to tell me.

"A box?" I echoed, a little relieved that the bewildering price of apples was not in question.

"A gittar," explained Sammy, his black face deadly serious. "We each got us a gittar. We plays us gittar music."

"Also, us—we sings," nodded Hammy enticingly. They obviously wanted me to say something. Their eyes begged me to say it, but I could not imagine what it was. It somehow never occurred to me that the two black boys would be coming to see me about the party.

But that was it. Sammy and Hammy wanted to go to the party, and, moreover, they wanted to be on the program.

"But I ain't got no two-bits," said Sammy, his mouth drooping sadly.

"Nor me," echoed Hammy. "You said—come to you, Miz Carey—" His voice died away plaintively.

"We'll work for you—hard," offered Sammy.

Their eyes held mine apprehensively, like spaniels' eyes, hoping for a kind word.

"That's fine," I said with unnecessary vigor. "Fine! I'll put you down for the program. And don't you worry about the money. Your music will pay your way."

It was the wrong thing to say. I knew it when the boys stiffened into black statues and their faces hardened into expressionless masks.

"Our mammy say—work for what you gets," Hammy said at last, adding with sober dignity, "So we works for you."

"Yes," I said quickly, "maybe you'd better, so the others won't be jealous and think I like you best."

A look of blind adoration came into Sammy's face, and Hammy grinned in a pleased sort of way.

So it was fixed. I gave the boys the tickets, ostentatiously taking fifty cents out of my purse and putting it ceremoniously into the "party box." The work was to be done later when I needed something done.

As the day for the party approached, excitement began to run high in the freshman class. The twins whispered to me that they had been "practicing up," and the sight of their raptly pleased faces intensified in me a little feeling of doubt I'd been trying to suppress. What, I thought, if the white children should be unkind to the black boys? What if the others on the program should refuse to appear with them? And what about the dance? What little girl would dance with them—and would I want her to, if she would?

I needn't have worried about the program. Apparently no parental ultimatum had been laid down. Perhaps no one had mentioned that the black boys were to make music, or perhaps the hours of the party were to be a sort of secular Truce of God wherein even black boys with a bad mother could have their hour of fun.

The party was to begin at eight, and at seven-thirty the gym was almost filled with children, all the little girls in bright new party dresses, with their hair tortured into elaborate beauty-parlor curls, sitting shyly on one side of the decorated gym, while all the little boys, dressed uncomfortably in new suits, with their damp hair brushed to alarming neatness, were seated on the other. The problem of the first half of the evening, as far as we teachers were concerned, was to coax the two groups, much against their wills, to consent to dance together, while the problem of the last half was to pry them apart, and get them home before irate parents began telephoning.

But first came the program. Promptly at eight, since everyone had already been there for at least a half-hour, the curtain went, after several false starts and muffled grunts from the laboring stagehands.

Mary Ellen Adams and Jo Anne Merrill gave their usual military tap-dance, which, since Mary Ellen is short and fat and lazy, and Jo Anne tall and thin and active, was rather far from the military effect desired. Little Genevieve Johnson sang "Ciribiribin," which she pronounced "See-ree-bee-ree-bean" for some unknown reason, and, with practically no encouragement, graciously added the encore "Blues in the Night." Glen Tillman played an excruciating violin solo, during which, mercifully, one string broke, so that the rest of the solo was, by anybody's mathematics, only three-fourths as bad as the first. Benny Norton gave a reading in Swedish dialect with occasional lapses into Irish, Yiddish, and just plain American.

Then the twins came out from the opposite side of the stage, hesitating, looking dwarfed and lonely under the floodlights, black faces glistening and fearful, patched Sunday best pressed within an inch of its life. They clutched their cheap "gittars," looked out uncertainly at the darkened gym, struck a few chords, and then they sang.

I don't remember much else, not even what they sang. There was stamping of feet when they finished, and shouting. They sang song after song. They sang as the class danced, when it did dance. They sang with the Capehart and without it. They sang while the lunch was passed out until the class president himself brought them two heaped plates and clapped each of the boys on the shoulder by way of congratulation, while the class cheered through mouthfuls of sandwich and cake and waved pop bottles in the air.

They never left the stage all evening. Now, at last, something was well with them: the little black boys, for whom  $3 \times 8$  was a variable, could sing.

After that, school was their heaven. Boys and girls who couldn't play with them outside of school never fail to call, "Hi, Ham! Hi, Sam!" in school. Math homework papers grew mysteriously accurate though tests still revealed the most abysmal misconceptions concerning mathematical practice. Even the seniors had them sing at their class party. They made the senior glee club, though they had feared before to try out for the junior one.

And they haunted my footsteps with a doglike persistence that came near to wearing me out.

"When we going to work out that fifty cents, Miz Carey, ma'am?"

"When the frost is out of the ground," I explained for the tenth time. "I want you to spade my flower garden."

A day later: "When that frost get outa that ground?"

"Not for two weeks, at least."

Two days later: "That frost gone yet, Miz Carey?"

"Not yet," patiently.

"My! My! Sure stays a long time—that frost!"

When at last the frost did depart, the two black boys attacked my little garden spot with a vigor it had never known before. They trailed quack-grass roots to their remotest hiding places and exterminated them forever. They spaded and weeded and spaded again.

"That's a great deal of work for fifty cents," I teased at last, a little troubled at the sight of their thin bent backs stooping over my garden so long.

"Our mammy say—work good," Sammy said firmly, and Hammy's monkey-thin face echoed the stubborn set of his brother's jaw.

"You give us those seeds—we plant 'em," Hammy called pleadingly.

They planted my seeds, they hovered over the new little shoots, they weeded and watered and tended. I tried to give them extra pay, but they stiffened with hurt pride.

"Our mammy say—'you take good care o' Miz Carey's garden, for she been purely good to you.'"

So I gave up in despair and let them do as they wished. I did all I could to get my neighbors to give them odd jobs, but only a few did, for the black boys' mother had had her baby, a girl baby, almost white, old Dr. Bates said, with hair like Cash Benson's.

In school the boys still haunted my room after class. They'd sit staring at my face, saying never a word until I had finished my work, and then not much unless I set the pace.

One afternoon I'd been reading a volume of Blake's poems, and on an impulse I asked them if they'd like me to read them a poem about a little black boy. I didn't think they'd understand a word of it, but I love to read poetry aloud, even if it's only to myself. Only after I had started to read did it occur to me that the black boys might read into it something that Blake had never intended, that I might be shaking their protective unawareness, might be emphasizing their difference in a way bad for them. But I had started and I had to go on.

They sat still as statues while I read:

My mother bore me in the Southern wild,  
And I am black, but O, my soul is white!  
White as an angel is the English child,  
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,  
And, sitting down before the heat of day,  
She took me on her lap and kissed me,  
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look, the rising sun: there God does live,  
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,  
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;  
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face  
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,  
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,  
Saying, 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,  
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;  
And thus I say to little English boy.  
When I from black and he from white cloud free,  
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear  
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;  
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
And be like him, and he will then love me.

I watched their faces as I finished. They were still and solemn, but radiant.

"Our mammy say—heaven's like that," Hammy said softly at last.

"Who that man say all that?" Sammy whispered in an awed voice.

"William Blake, a very great poet."

"He a preacher, Miz Carey, I bet?" Hammy asked, looking at me hopefully.

"No, not exactly," I answered, and saw the radiance in their faces dim at my words. Impulsively I added, "But he was a man who thought he spoke with angels, and—and he wrote 'as one having authority, and not as the scribes!'" And I found myself telling them how Blake, dying, sang of the glories of heaven opening before his dimming eyes.

Hammy's face shone, and his teeth flashed in a grin of solemn delight.

"He sure knew—that white man!"

"God sure told him sumpin," Sammy affirmed, nodding deeply.

"Read it again, please, Miz Carey," said Sammy suddenly.

I read it again, and they both sighed with one accord.

"That's better'n music," Hammy whispered. "Read some more again? Huh? Please?"

I laughed and shut the book. "No, twice is enough. Some other day, perhaps."

But I never read it to them again.

As he went out of the door, Sammy turned. "You like rock gardens, Miz Carey?"

"Why, yes, of course," I said, "but if you're thinking— You've done altogether too much—"

"We knows a place," Hammy was saying dreamily, "a place where there's moss like a feather bed an' little white violets that's sweet as Jesus' breath—"

That was the last I was ever to see them. They rowed across to the place they knew after supper that night, a marshy island not very far offshore. Folks who saw them start said the water was choppy as they were going over. Coming back the boat overturned, and before the men could get to them they were drowned.

I heard the next morning in school.

The late May sun was warm on my hair that day, when school was over and I was plodding along the beach toward the Negro woman's shack. The silvery sand filtered into my slippers and dribbled out with each difficult step. Under the slanting sun the smooth blue waves lapped the shore and retreated in little slipping movements, as if they had never known storms or death.

Around the shack the rank shore grasses had been cleared away with scrupulous care, and in the shifting sand a few drooping plants gave evidence of the twins' efforts to make a garden of their own.

She opened the rough, tarpaper-covered door when I knocked—a thin, worn woman of about forty, with the fine features and liquid eyes one sometimes sees in people of her race. Her lined black face was masklike in its calm, but the eyes themselves were alive and tragic.

I don't remember what inadequate thing I said to her, but she must have felt my sorrow reaching out to hers, for she thanked me with something of the boys' doglike look in her eyes.

"They loved you so, Miz Carey," she said strangely, and I had the feeling that behind her simple words there was something strong and seeking, something she wanted of me—wanted badly, if only I could find out what it was.

She asked me in with homely courtesy and pulled out a rough chair for me to sit on.

The one room was painfully neat and bare. In a broken tumbler on the table a small bunch of short-stemmed white violets was beginning to droop, and on the ledge of the one window I saw the purple tulips I had given Hammy two days before. A table, three old chairs—one with no back—a small camp stove, and two camp cots were the only furnishings. The floor, rough and splintered from much scrubbing, was immaculate.

That space of floor seemed to me that day to be waiting mutely—waiting for the boys, who hadn't yet been brought back in their cheap little coffins. People never knew until long afterwards that it was Cash Benson who had paid for it all, giving them the best funeral he could afford. That, at least, is to his credit, though he went off the next week and never came back. Reverend Swanson, too, came, the good old man, although he had to face the disapproval of the Swedish Baptist ladies to do it. I've thought of it often since and blessed the kindness of his gentle old heart.

But that day there were just the two of us. I sat by the table, and the afternoon sun through the only window threw the shadow of Hammy's tulips across the bare floor.

The boys' mother stood by the other side of the table, black and monumental and unweeping, staring at me with that queer tense look, seeming about to speak and then closing her lips gravely.

The baby began to cry, and she went over and picked the little thing up from the bed, blindly, as if she hardly knew what she did. After a moment she sat down opposite me, rocking the child gently in her arms.

Awkwardly I tried to comfort her, saying it was good she had the girl baby to fill a part of her heart. She looked at me strangely across the sun-mottled oilcloth, her ugly, black face sharp with pain.

"But they was my true-born child'en," she said, as if reasoning with one who was dull of understanding. Slowly she looked down at the whimpering infant in her arms. "She white man's child, poor little thing."

Then she looked at me straight in the eyes, not doglike but womanlike. "I was all alone," she said simply.

I tried to speak, but there was nothing to say now.

When I started to go at last, it was with the feeling of how very futile my visit had been, of how empty sympathy and words of sympathy were to this woman.

She rose reluctantly when I did, saying softly, "You was good as they said you was to come—" Then she added pleadingly, as if she feared I would misunderstand, "But it ain't fitten you come no more. Besides—" Her voice caught, but she swallowed and went patiently on, "Besides, it be best you remember Hamuel and Samuel as they was—yestiday."

I nodded mutely, and she seemed satisfied that I had not misunderstood or taken offense.

But on the doorstep she stopped me again, hesitating, uncertain, and I knew that the thing that was haunting her was still unsaid. I could feel the conflict of urgency and fear in her, the tension and the longing, but I had to watch her helplessly, hoping she would speak, afraid to ask for fear what I might say would be wrong.

She drew a deep breath then, throwing her head back nervously. Her eyes were shining and fearful, and the words, when they came, were slurred and hurried, breathless.

"Last night—suppertime—Hammy 'n' Sammy, they full of some word-song you read 'em. They say—it better'n music. They go away singin' it to them two— Something about—black boys? You remember, Miz Carey, ma'am?"

Her breast rose and fell in agitation, and the child, awakening again, began to cry.

"I'll send you a copy," I said thickly. "A poem I read to them."

She shook her head. "You say it to me, please? I never did learn book-reading."

I turned my head away, thinking of the scrapbook of "nice words" she had kept for her boys.

What I could remember, garbled, imperfect, half-forgotten, I tried to say, remembering the two thin, black faces lifted to mine in the quiet of the dusty schoolroom.

She was very still when I had finished, but her face was bright with a faith I could never know.

"My Hammy and Sammy?" she said wonderingly. "Maybe they God's white lambs today?"

And then she wept, putting her face down against the baby in her arms. "Oh, bless God," she whispered brokenly. "Blessed God, make it so. Sweet Jesus, make it so."

I touched her hand silently in farewell and went away. At the gate, when I turned and looked back, she had lifted her head, and I saw that she was



looking far out over the water, gazing across at the distant shoreline of that green, marshy island where the moss is like a feather bed and the little white violets are as sweet as Jesus' breath.

# EYE-WITNESS

*Ridgely Torrence (1925)*

Down by the railroad in a green valley	With idle wonder what the men were doing,	20
By dancing water, there he stayed awhile	Seeing they were so strangely fixed, and seeing	
Singing, and three men with him, listeners,	Torn papers from their smeary, dreary meal	
All tramps, all homeless reapers of the wind,	Spread on the ground with old tomato cans	
Motionless now and while the song went on	Muddy with dregs of lukewarm chicory,	5
Transfigured into images thronged with visions;	Neglected while they listened to the song,	25
There with the late light of the sunset on them	And while he sang the singer's face was lifted,	
And on clear water spinning from a spring	And the sky shook down a soft light upon him	
Through little cones of sand dancing and fading,	Out of its branches where like fruits there were	
Close beside pine woods where a hermit-thrush	Many beautiful stars and planets moving,	10
Cast, when love dazzled him, shadows of music	With lands upon them, rising from their seas,	30
That lengthened, fluting, through the singer's pauses	Glorious lands with glittering sands upon them,	
While the sure earth rolled eastward bringing stars	With soils of gold and magic mould for seeding,	
Over the singer and the men that listened	The shining loam of lands afoam with gardens	
There by the roadside, understanding all.	On mightier stars with giant rains and suns	15
A train went by but nothing seemed to be changed.	There in the heavens, but on none of all	35
Some eye at a car window must have flashed	Was there ground better than he stood upon:	
From the plush world inside the glassy Pullman,	There was no world there in the sky above him.	
Carelessly bearing off the scene for ever,	Deeper in promise than the earth beneath him	

Whose dust had flowered up in him  
the singer  
And three men understanding every  
word. 40

*The Tramp Sings:*

I will sing, I will go, and never ask  
me why.  
I was born a rover and a passer-by.

I seem to myself like water and sky,  
A river and a rover and a passer-by.

But in the winter three years back 45  
We lit us a night fire by the track,

And the snow came up and the fire it  
flew  
And we couldn't find the warming  
room for two.

One had to suffer, so I left him the fire  
And I went to the weather from my  
heart's desire, 50

It was night on the line, it was no  
more fire,  
But the zero whistle through the icy  
wire.

As I went suffering through the snow  
Something like a shadow came mov-  
ing slow.

I went up to it and I said a word; 55  
Something flew above it like a kind  
of bird.

I leaned in closer and I saw a face;  
A light went round me but I kept my  
place.

My heart went open like an apple  
sliced; 59  
I saw my Saviour and I saw my Christ.

Well, you may not read it in a book,

But it takes a gentle Saviour to give a  
gentle look.

I looked in His eyes and I read the  
news;  
His heart was having the railroad  
blues.

Oh, the railroad blues will cost you  
dear, 65  
Keeps you moving on for something  
that you don't see here.

We stood and whispered in a kind of  
moon;  
The line was looking like May and  
June.

I found He was a roamer and a jour-  
ney man,  
Looking for a lodging since the night  
began. 70

He went to the doors but He didn't  
have the pay,  
He went to the windows, then He  
went away.

Says: "We'll walk together and we'll  
both be fed."  
Says: "I will give you the 'other'  
bread."

Oh, the bread He gave and without  
money! 75  
O drink, O fire, O burning honey!

It went all through me like a shining  
storm:  
I saw inside me; it was light and  
warm.

I saw deep under and I saw above;  
I saw the stars weighed down with  
love. 80

They sang that love to burning birth,  
They poured that music to the earth.

I heard the stars sing low like mothers.  
He said: "Now look, and help feed  
others." 84

I looked around, and as close as  
touch  
Was everybody that suffered much.

They reached out, there was darkness  
only;  
They could not see us, they were  
lonely.

I saw the hearts that deaths took  
hold of,  
With the wounds bare that were not  
told of; 90

Hearts with things in them making  
gashes;  
Hearts that were choked with their  
dreams' ashes;

Women in front of the rolled-back  
air,  
Looking at their breasts and nothing  
there;

Good men wasting and trapped in  
hells; 95  
Hurt lads shivering with the fare-  
thee-wells.

I saw them as if something bound  
them;  
I stood there but my heart went round  
them.

I begged Him not to let me see them  
wasted.  
Says: "Tell them then what you have  
tasted." 100

I told Him I was weak as a rained-on  
bee;  
Told Him I was lost. Says: "Lean on  
me."

Something happened then I could not  
tell,  
But I knew I had the water for every  
hell.

Any other thing it was no use bring-  
ing; 105  
They needed what the stars were  
singing,

What the whole sky sang like waves  
of light,  
The tune that it danced to, day and  
night.

Oh, I listened to the sky for the tune  
to come;  
The song seemed easy, but I stood  
there dumb. 110

The stars could feel me reaching  
through them;  
They let down light and drew me to  
them.

I stood in the sky in a light like day,  
Drinking in the word that all things  
say

Where the worlds hang growing in  
clustered shapes 115  
Dripping the music like wine from  
grapes.

With "Love, Love, Love," above the  
pain,  
—The vinelike song with its winelike  
rain.

Through heaven under heaven the  
song takes root  
Of the turning, burning, deathless  
fruit. 120

I came to the earth and the pain so  
near me,  
I tried that song but they couldn't  
hear me.

I went down into the ground to grow  
A seed for a song that would make  
men know.

Into the ground from my roamer's  
light, 125  
I went; He watched me sink to night.

Deep in the ground from my human  
grieving,  
His pain ploughed in me to believing.

Oh, He took earth's pain to be His  
bride,  
While the heart of life sang in His side.

For I felt that pain, I took its kiss, 131  
My heart broke into dust with His.

Then sudden through the earth I  
found life springing;  
The dust men trampled on was sing-  
ing.

Deep in my dust I felt its tones; 135  
The roots of beauty went round my  
bones.

I stirred, I rose like a flame, like a  
river,  
I stood on the line, I could sing for  
ever.

Love had pierced into my human  
sheathing,  
Song came out of me simple as  
breathing. 140

A freight came by, the line grew  
colder.  
He laid His hand upon my shoulder.

Says, "Don't stay on the line such  
nights,"  
And led me by the hand to the sta-  
tion lights.

I asked Him in front of the station-  
house wall 145  
If He had lodging. Says: "None at  
all."

I pointed to my heart and looked in  
His face.—  
"Here,—if you haven't got a better  
place."

He looked and He said: "Oh, we still  
must roam  
But if you'll keep it open, well, I'll  
call it 'home.'" 150

The thrush now slept whose pillow  
was his wing.

So the song ended and the four re-  
mained

Still in the faint starshine that silvered  
them,

While the low sound went on of  
broken water

Out of the spring and through the  
darkness flowing 155

Over a stone that held it from the sea.  
Whether the men spoke after could  
not be told,

A mist from the ground so veiled  
them, but they waited

A little longer till the moon came up;  
Then on the gilded track leading to  
the mountains, 160

Against the moon they faded in com-  
mon gold

And earth bore East with all toward  
the new morning.

## THE DIVINE IMAGE

*William Blake (1789)*

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
All pray in their distress;  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love	5	In what distant deeps or skies	5
Is God, our Father dear,		Burnt the fire of thine eyes?	
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love		On what wings dare he aspire?	
Is man, His child and care.		What the hand dare seize the fire?	

For Mercy has a human heart,		And what shoulder, and what art,	
Pity, a human face,	10	Could twist the sinews of thy heart?	
And Love, the human form divine,		And when thy heart began to beat,	11
And Peace, the human dress.		What dread hand? and what dread	
		feet?	

Then every man, of every clime,		What the hammer? what the chain?	
That prays in his distress,		In what furnace was thy brain?	
Prays to the human form divine,	15	What the anvil? what dread grasp	15
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.		Dare its deadly terrors clasp?	

And all must love the human form,		When the stars threw down their	
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;		spears,	
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell		And watered heaven with their	
There God is dwelling too.	20	tears,	

### THE TIGER

*William Blake (1794)*

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright		Tiger! Tiger! burning bright	
In the forests of the night,		In the forests of the night,	
What immortal hand or eye		What immortal hand or eye	
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?		Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?	

### THE LAMB

*William Blake (1789)*

Little Lamb, who made thee?		Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,	
Dost thou know who made thee?		Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:	
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,		He is called by thy name,	
By the stream and o'er the mead;		For He calls Himself a Lamb,	
Gave thee clothing of delight,	5	He is meek, and He is mild;	15
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;		He became a little child.	
Gave thee such a tender voice,		I a child, and thou a lamb,	
Making all the vales rejoice?		We are called by His name.	
Little Lamb, who made thee?		Little Lamb, God bless thee!	
Dost thou know who made thee?	10	Little Lamb, God bless thee!	20

## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

*Francis Thompson (1891)*

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter. 5  
     Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
     And shot, precipitated,  
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
     From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
     But with unhurrying chase, 10  
     And unperturbèd pace,  
     Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
     They beat—and a Voice beat  
     More instant than the Feet—  
     “All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.” 15

    I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
     Trellised with intertwining charities;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
     Yet was I sore adread 20  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
     The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled, 25  
     And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
     Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;  
     Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o’ the moon.  
 I said to dawn: Be sudden—to eve: Be soon; 30  
     With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
     From this tremendous Lover!  
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
     I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
 My own betrayal in their constancy, 35  
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
     Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
     Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
     But whether they swept, smoothly fleet; 40  
     The long savannahs of the blue;  
     Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
     They clanged his chariot ’thwart a heaven,

Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue. 45  
Still with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
Came on the following Feet,  
And a Voice above their beat— 50  
“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.”

I sought no more that, after which I strayed,  
In face of man or maid;  
But still within the little children's eyes  
Seems something, something that replies, 55  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!  
I turned me to them very wistfully;  
But, just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60  
“Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share  
With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship;  
Let me greet you lip to lip,  
Let me twine with your caresses,  
Wantoning 65  
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
Banqueting  
With her in her wind-walled palace,  
Underneath her azured daïs,  
Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70  
From a chalice  
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”  
So it was done:  
I in their delicate fellowship was one—  
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies. 75  
I knew all the swift importings  
On the wilful face of skies;  
I knew how the clouds arise  
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;  
All that's born or dies 80  
Rose and drooped with—made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—  
With them joyed and was bereaven.  
I was heavy with the even,  
When she lit her glimmering tapers 85  
Round the day's dead sanctities.  
I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
Heaven and I wept together,  
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine; 90

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
     I laid my own to beat,  
     And share commingling heat;  
 But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.  
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek. 95  
 For ah! we know not what each other says,  
     These things and I; in sound *I* speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
 Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;  
     Let her, if she would owe me, 100  
 Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
     The breasts o' her tenderness:  
 Never did any milk of hers once bless  
     My thirsting mouth.  
     Nigh and nigh draws the chase, 105  
     With unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;  
     And past those noisèd Feet  
     A voice comes yet more fleet—  
 "Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me." 110

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
 My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
     And smitten me to my knee;  
     I am defenceless utterly,  
     I slept, methinks, and woke, 115  
 And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
 In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
     I shook the pillaring hours  
 And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,  
 I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years— 120  
 My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
 My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
 Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.  
     Yea, faileth now even dream  
 The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist; 125  
 Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
 I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
 Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
 For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.  
     Ah! is Thy love indeed 130  
 A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
 Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?  
     Ah! must—  
     Designer infinite!—  
 Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it? 135  
 My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;  
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,



Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
 From the dank thoughts that shiver  
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140  
 Such is; what is to be?  
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?  
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;  
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
 From the hid battlements of Eternity, 145  
 Those shaken mists a space unsettled, then  
 Round the half-glimpst turrets slowly wash again;  
 But not ere him who summoneth  
 I first have seen, enwound  
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned; 150  
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields  
 Be dunged with rotten death?  
 Now of that long pursuit 155  
 Comes on at hand the bruit;  
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
 "And is thy earth so marred,  
 Shattered in shard on shard?  
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me! 160  
 "Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),  
 "And human love needs human meriting:  
 How hast thou merited— 165  
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
 Alack, thou knowest not  
 How little worthy of any love thou art!  
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
 Save Me, save only Me? 170  
 All which I took from thee I did but take,  
 Not for thy harms,  
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
 All which thy child's mistake  
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home: 175  
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"  
 Halts by me that footfall:  
 Is my gloom, after all,  
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
 "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180  
 I am He Whom thou seekest!  
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

## THE PULLEY

*George Herbert (1633)*

When God at first made Man, Having a glass of blessings standing by— "Let us," said He, "pour on him all we can; Let the world's riches, which dis- persèd lie, Contract into a span."	5	"For if I should," said he, "Bestow this jewel also on my crea- ture, He would adore my gifts instead of me, And rest in nature, not the God of nature; So both should losers be."	15
So strength first made a way; Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure. When almost all was out, God made a stay, Perceiving that, alone of all his treas- ure, Rest in the bottom lay.	10	"Yet let him keep the rest, But keep them with repining restless- ness; Let him be rich and weary, that at least, If goodness lead him not, yet weariness May toss him to my breast."	20

## THE COLLAR

*George Herbert (1633)*

I struck the board, and cried, "No more; I will abroad! What! shall I ever sigh and pine? My lines and life are free; free as the road, Loose as the wind, as large as store. Shall I be still in suit?"	6	Not so, my heart; but there is fruit, And thou hast hands. Recover all thy sigh-blown age On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute	20
Have I no harvest but a thorn To let me blood, and not restore What I have lost with cordial fruit? Sure there was wine	10	Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage, Thy rope of sands Which petty thoughts have made; and made to thee Good cable, to enforce and draw, And be thy law,	25
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn Before my tears did drown it; Is the year only lost to me? Have I no bays to crown it, No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted,	15	While thou didst wink and wouldst not see Away! take heed; I will abroad. Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears. He that forbears	30
All wasted?		To suit and serve his need Deserves his load."	



## JUSTUS QUIDEM TU ES . .

*Gerard Manley Hopkins (1918)*

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend  
 With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.  
 Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must  
 Disappointment all I endeavor end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend, 5  
 How would thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost  
 Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust  
 Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,  
 Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes  
 Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again 10  
 With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes  
 Them; birds build—but not I build; no, but strain,  
 Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.  
 Mine, O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain.

## THE PREACHER

*DuBose Heyward (1931)*

In the red church with checkered window-panes,  
 That squats among its cluttered graves, and stains  
 The laurelled clearing with its ugly blot,  
 He preached his God on Sunday, while the hot  
 Thin mountain air vibrated to the sound 5  
 Of hotter threats, and in from miles around,  
 Threading still trails through rhododendron gloom,  
 Came silent groups to fill his house of doom.

Raw-boned and thunder-voiced, with brandished fist,  
 He shouted of an errant egotist 10  
 Swift to avenge a wrong, carrying hate  
 Beyond the grave, hurling a dire fate  
 On all who failed to follow his decree.  
 Until his God emerged, the Deity  
 Behind the mountain feud—the iron code 15  
 Of eye for eye was his. Slowly there showed,  
 Behind impassive faces, sullen fear  
 Of the all-seeing Foe they worshipped there.

Wednesday the freshet came; and Pigeon Creek,  
 That threads the laurel blossoms on a streak 20  
 Of morning sunshine, dropped its slender song,  
 Drew one deep breath, then lifting with a long

Froth-lipped and baying, oceanward and east.  
 Where the trail leads from church to Garvin's house, 25  
 Tom Garvin's boy was driving up the cows.  
 A vaulting seethe of water, trees, and foam  
 Lunged for the bank, then curved and tumbled home.  
 On yellow chaos, and the sky's hard slate,  
 For one swift heart-beat, beauty, slim and straight, 30  
 Swung sharply upward, crumpled, hung and fell:  
 There may have been a cry—no one could tell.

That night, ten miles away, the preacher heard.  
 The first stream took his horse and rig; the third  
 Hurled him a mile downstream, and gashed his head. 35  
 A sallow morning light lay on the bed  
 At Garvin's when he staggered through the door  
 And closed it very softly on the roar  
 Of hungry water. Slowly silence grew  
 And spread—and suddenly the watchers knew 40  
 There was a God, and He was very kind.  
 While the grim, silent man, with eyes gone blind.  
 Gathered the broken form that never stirred  
 Into his bleeding arms—and said no word.

## NO COWARD SOUL IS MINE

*Emily Brontë (1850)*

No coward soul is mine,	So surely anchored on 15
No trembler in the world's storm-	The steadfast rock of immortality.
troubled sphere;	
I see Heaven's glories shine,	With wide-embracing love
And faith shines equal, arming me	Thy spirit animates eternal years,
from fear.	Pervades and broods above,
	Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates,
O God within my breast, 5	and rears 20
Almighty, ever-present Deity!	
Life—that in me has rest,	Though earth and man were
As I—undying Life—have power in	gone,
Thee!	And suns and universes ceased to be,
	And Thou were left alone,
Vain are the thousand creeds	Every existence would exist in Thee.
That move men's hearts—unutter-	
ably vain; 10	There is not room for Death, 25
Worthless as withered weeds,	Nor atom that his might could render
Or idlest froth amid the boundless	void;
main,	Thou—Thou art Being and
	Breath,
To waken doubt in one	And what Thou art may never be
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;	destroyed.

## DAREST THOU NOW, O SOUL

(From Passage to India)

*Walt Whitman (1855)*

Darest thou now, O soul,  
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand, 5  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul,  
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,  
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.  
Till when the ties loosen, 10  
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,  
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bound us.

Then we burst forth, we float,  
In Time and Space, O soul, prepared for them,  
Equal, equipt at last (O joy! O fruit of all!), them to fulfil, O Soul. 15

INSIDE OF KING'S COL-  
LEGE CHAPEL, CAM-  
BRIDGE*William Wordsworth (1822)*

Tax not the royal Saint with vain ex-  
pense,  
With ill-watched aims the Architect  
who planned—

Albeit laboring for a scanty band  
Of white robed Scholars only—this  
immense

And glorious Work of fine intelli-  
gence! 5

Give all thou canst; high Heaven re-  
jects the lore

Of nicely calculated less or more;  
So deemed the man who fashioned  
for the sense

These lofty pillars, spread that

Self-poised, and scooped into ten  
thousand cells, 10  
Where light and shade repose, where  
music dwells

Lingering—and wandering on as  
loath to die;  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness  
yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortal-  
ity. 15

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVE-  
NING, CALM AND FREE*William Wordsworth (1802)*

It is a beauteous evening, calm and  
free,

The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad  
sun.

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er  
the Sea: 5

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion  
make

A sound like thunder—everlastingly.  
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest  
with me here,

If thou appear untouched by solemn  
thought, 10

Thy nature is not therefore less  
divine:

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all  
the year,

And worship'st at the Temple's inner  
shrine,

God being with thee when we know  
it not.

## GOD-FORGOTTEN

Thomas Hardy (1901)

I towered far, and lo! I stood within  
The presence of the Lord Most High,  
Sent thither by the sons of Earth, to  
win  
Some answer to their cry.

—"The Earth, sayest thou? The Hu-  
man race? 5  
By Me created? Sad its lot?  
Nay: I have no remembrance of such  
place:  
Such world I fashioned not."—

—"O Lord, forgive me when I say  
Thou spakest the word and made it  
all."— 10  
"The Earth of men—let me bethink  
me . . . Yea!  
I dimly do recall.

"Some tiny sphere I built long back  
(Mid millions of such shapes of mine)  
So named . . . It perished, surely—  
not a wrack 15

"It lost my interest from the first,  
My aims therefor succeeding ill;  
Haply it died of doing as it durst?"—  
"Lord, it existeth still."— 20

"Dark, then, its life! For not a cry  
Of aught it bears do I now hear;  
Of its own act the threads were snapt  
whereby  
Its plaints had reached mine ear.

"It used to ask for gifts of good, 25  
Till came its severance, self-entailed,  
When sudden silence on that side en-  
sued,  
And has till now prevailed.

"All other orbs have kept in touch;  
Their voicings reach me speedily: 30  
Thy people took upon them over-  
much  
In sundering them from me!

"And it is strange—though sad  
enough—  
Earth's race should think that one  
whose call  
Frames, daily, shining spheres of flaw-  
less stuff 35  
Must heed their tainted ball! . . .

"But sayest it is by pangs distraught,  
And strife, and silent suffering?—  
Sore grieved am I that injury should  
be wrought  
Even on so poor a thing! 40

"Thou shouldst have learnt that *Not  
to Mend*  
For Me could mean but *Not to Know*:  
Hence, Messengers! and straightway  
put an end  
To what men undergo." . . .

Homing at dawn, I thought to see 45  
One of the Messengers standing by.  
—Oh, childish thought! . . . Yet  
often it comes to me  
When trouble hovers nigh.

## THE CONCLUSION

*Sir Walter Raleigh (1618)*

Even such is time, that takes in trust  
 Our youth, our joys, our all we  
 have,  
 And pays us but with earth and dust;

Who, in the dark and silent grave,  
 When we have wandered all our  
 ways,  
 Shuts up the story of our days;  
 But from this earth, this grave, this  
 dust,  
 My God shall raise me up, I trust!



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# THE GOOD LIFE

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## ENJOYING LIFE

*W. N. P. Barbellion* (1920)

### I

WHEN I awoke, a glance toward the window told me that outside it had already happened—the sun was up! humming along through a cloudless sky full of bees and skylarks. I shut my eyes and buried my nose in the pillow, awake sufficiently to realize that another great day had dawned for me while I slept.

I lay still for a moment in luxurious anticipation and listened to a tiny joy, singing within like the voice of a girl in the distance, until at last great waves of happiness roared through my heart like sea horses. I jumped out of bed, flung on my dressing-gown, and went off across the meadow to bathe in the stream. Into the water I plunged, and struggled and kicked with a sensuous delight in its coldness and in every contraction of a muscle, glad to be nude and clean and cool among the dragon flies and trout. I clambered to a rock in midstream, on which I rested in a moment of expansion, relaxed in every tissue. The current rocked one foot in the water, and the sun made every cell in my body vibrate. Upstream, a dipper sang—and surely nothing but happiness could ever enter life again! Neither the past nor the future existed for me any more, but only the glorious and all-absorbing present. I put my whole being into the immediate ticking hour with its sixty minutes of precious life, and catching each pearl drop as it fell, said, "Now my happiness is complete, and now, and now." I lay thus for I know not how long, centuries perhaps, for down in the silent well of our existence time is not reckoned by the clock, nor our abiding joy in idle, obstinate words. Then I rubbed down with a hard towel—how I loved my cool, pink skin!—and stood a moment in the shade of the pine trees, still unembarrassed by a single demoralizing garment. I was free, immaculate, untouched by anything coarser than the soft morning air around and the moss in the turf that supported the soles of my feet.

In the afternoon, I strode over the hills in a spirit of burning exultation. The moors rolled to the sea infinitely far, and the sea to the horizon infinitely wide. I opened both arms and tried to embrace the immensity of that wind-swept space through sheer love of it. The wind roared past my ears and

through my hair. Overhead a herring gull made use of the air currents and soared on motionless wings. Verily, the flight of a gull is as magnificent as the Andes! No other being save myself was in sight. If I had chanced to meet someone I should have greeted him with the question that was stinging the tip of my tongue, "What does it all mean and what do you think?" And he, of course, after a moment's puzzled reflection, would have answered: "It means nout, tho' I think us could do with a change of Government." But so excited as to be heedless of his reply, I should have followed up, in the grand manner, with: "Whence do we come and whither do we go?" or "Tell me where have you lived, what countries have you seen? Which is your favorite mountain? Do you like thunderstorms or sunsets best? How many times have you been in love, and what about God?"

At night, I turned homeward, flushed and excited with the day's life, going to bed unwillingly at last and even depressed because the day was at an end and I must needs put myself into a state of unconsciousness while the earth itself is never asleep, but always spins along amid the stars with its precious human freightage. To lose a single minute of conscious life in sleep seemed a real loss!

## II

I like all things which are swift or immense—lightning, Popocatepetl, London, Roosevelt!

So, anyhow, I like to think in periods of ebullience when wind and sun beat down upon the face and the blood races along the arteries. We live in an age of hustle and speed. We sweep from one end of the country to the other by rail, plane, and motor, and the quidnunc querulously complains, "Too much rushing about nowadays and too little thinking." Yet does he think we ought to remain at home, arranging the cosmos with Lotze or William James, while Hamel gets into an aeroplane on the neighboring heath and shows us how to loop the loop? Must I be improving my mind with sociological ruminations while the herring fleet is ready to take me out to the deep sea? The speed, ferocity, and dash of the London street, full of cars and strenuous, sleek, top-hatted gentlemen and raddled women, is most exhilarating. Londoners must enjoy a perpetual exhilaration. Like mountain air, I suspect that the stinks of petrol and horse dung get into the blood. There may be a little mountain sickness at first, but the system soon adapts itself. On the first day of my arrival in London, as the train moved over the roofs of the squalid tenements in the environs of Waterloo and round about the great dome of St. Paul's, its cross reaching up into the sky like a great symbolic X, I kept thinking to myself that here was the greatest city in the world, and that here again was I, in it—one of its five millions of inhabitants. I said so to myself aloud and whistled low. Already I was in love with London's dirt and grandeur, and by the time I had reached the Strand, I

plunged like a man who cannot swim. After all, only Shakespeare could stand on the top of Mont Blanc and not lose his spiritual equilibrium.

## III

But it is not always possible to be living on the heights. And life in the plains is often equally furious. We may climb to peaks in Darien without ever leaving our armchairs. We may be swimming the Hellespont as we light a cigarette. Some of the tiniest outward incidents in life, in appearance as harmless as cricket balls, may be actually as explosive as bombs. That little, scarcely audible thing, a kiss, may shatter the fortress of the heart with the force of a fifteen-inch gun. A melody in music, one of Bach's fugues or the Unfinished Symphony of Schubert, may, in a few bars, create a *bouleversement*, sweep us out into the high seas past all our usual anchorages, and leave us there alone to struggle with a new destiny. And who cannot recall—some there be, I think, who, with delightful preciosity, collect them in the memory—those silent, instantaneous flashes of collusion with beauty, of which even the memory so electrifies the emotions that no mental analysis of them is ever made. The intellect is knocked out in the first round. We can simply catalogue them without comment—for example, a girl leaping and running into the sea to bathe; those blue butterflies and thyme flowers which Richard Jefferies loved with an almost feminine tenderness; the nude body of a child of four; a young, red-topped larch cone; a certain smile; a pressure of the hand; an unresolved inflection of a voice.

## IV

Life pursues me like a fury. Everywhere, at all times, I am feeling, thinking, hoping, hating, loving, cheering. It is impossible to escape.

I once sought refuge in a deserted country churchyard, where the grave-stones stood higgledy-piggledy among the long grass, their inscriptions almost obliterated by moss and time. "Here," said I, "it will be cold and lifeless and I can rest." I wanted to be miserable, dull, and unresponsive. With difficulty I read an inscription expressing the sorrow of a father and mother in 1701 for the loss of their beautiful daughter, Joan, aged 21. I read others, but the most pathetic barely amused me. I was satisfactorily indifferent. These people, I said sardonically, had lived and suffered so long ago that even their sorrows were petrified. Parents' grief in 1701 is simply a piece of palæontology. So I passed on, content to be unmolested, thinking I had escaped. But beside the old graves were a few recent ones with fresh flowers upon them; across the road in the schoolroom the children began to sing; and up at the farm, I then recalled, the old folk, Mr. and Mrs. Brooks, were waiting for the call—all of them beneath the shadow of the church tower whose clock-face watched the

generations come and go and come again to lie beneath the shadow of the yews. I saw the procession of human life, generation after generation, pass through the village down through the ages, and though all had been silent before, I heard now the roar of existence sweeping through the churchyard as loudly as in Piccadilly.

I jumped from peak to peak of thought, from human life on the planet to the planet itself; the earth fell away from my feet, and far below was the round world whole, a sphere among other spheres in the planetary system bound up by the laws of evolution and motion. As I hung aloft at so great a height and in an atmosphere so cold and rare, I shivered at the immensity of the universe of which I formed a part; for the moment a colossal stage-fright seized me; I longed to cease to be, to vanish in complete self-annihilation. But only for a moment; then, gathering the forces of the soul as every man must and does at times of crisis, I leaped upon the rear of the great occasion before it was too late, crying: The world is a ship, on an unknown and dangerous commission. But I for my part, as a silly ship-boy, will stand on the ratlines and cheer. I left the churchyard almost hilarious!

## V

"Dans littérature," said M. Taine, "j'aime tout." I would shake his hand for saying that and add: "In life, monsieur, as well." All things attract me equally. I cannot concentrate. I am ready to do anything, go anywhere, think anything, read anything. Wherever I hitch my wagon I am confident of an adventurous ride. Somebody says, "Come and hear some Wagner." I am ready to go. Another, "I say, they are going to ring the bull"—and who wants to complete his masterpiece or count his money when they are going to ring the bull? I will go with you to Norway, Switzerland, Jericho, Timbuctoo. Talk to me about the Rosicrucians or the stomach of a flea and I will listen to you. Tell me that the Chelsea power station is as beautiful as the Parthenon at Athens and I'll believe you. Everything is beautiful, even the ugly—why did Whistler paint the squalor of the London streets, or Brangwyn the gloom of a steam crane? To subscribe to any one particular profession, mode of life, doctrine, philosophy, opinion, or enthusiasm, is to cut one's self off from all the rest. I subscribe to all. With the whole world before you, beware lest the machinery of education seizes hold of the equipotential of your youth and grinds you out the finished product! You were a human being to start with; now, you are only a soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor. Leonardo da Vinci, racked with frustrate passion after the universal, is reported to have declared that only to do one thing and only to know one thing was a disgrace, no less. "We should not be able to say of a man, 'He is a mathematician,' or 'a preacher,' or 'eloquent'; but that he is 'a gentleman.' That universal quality alone pleases me."

"The works of man don't interest me much," an enthusiast in natural his-

tory once said to me; "I prefer the works of God." Unctuous wretch! He was one of those forlorn creatures with a carefully ordered mind, his information and opinions written out in indelible ink and pigeonholed for easy reference. He had never shrunk to realize all he did not know—he knew all the things worth knowing. He never shuddered to reflect upon the limitations of a single point of view—other folk were simply wrong. He was scarcely one to understand the magnanimous phrase of the French, "Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner." Other folk were either good or bad.

## VI

Perhaps too great an enthusiasm exhausts the spirit. Love kills. I know it. The love of one's art or profession, passion for another's soul, for one's children, sap the life-blood and hurry us on to the grave. I know a man who killed himself with a passion for dragon flies—a passion ending in debauchery; and debauchery of books, lust of knowledge, is as fatal as any other kind.

I know it. But I don't care. Your minatory forefinger is of no avail. Already I am too far gone. Those days are ancient history now when I endured the torture of an attempt to reclaim myself. I even reduced myself to so little as a grain a day by reading Kant and talking to entomologists. But no permanent cure was ever effected.

Once, I recall, I sat down to study zoölogy, because I thought it would be sober and dull. How foolish! Rousseau said he cooled his brain by dissecting a moss. But I know of few more blood-curdling achievements than the thoroughly successful completion of a difficult dissection.

Then I immersed myself in old books and forgotten learning. I had the idea that a big enough tumulus of dust and parchments over my head would be a big enough stopper for the joy of life. I became an habitué of the British Museum reading room, and rummaged among the dead books, as Lord Rosebery calls them, but only to find that they were buried alive. Any unfortunate devil received the cataract of superlatives I poured upon him at the discovery of some lively memoirs of 1601. One of my favorite books became the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. I read its learned articles till my eyes ached and my head swam. The sight of those huge tomes made me tremble with a lover's impatience. I could have wept in thinking of all the facts I should never know and of all those I had forgotten! I grew to love facts and learning with the same passion as I had loved life. My enthusiasm was not quenched. It was only diverted.

I tried to laugh myself out of it. But it was no use being cynical. For I found that no fact, no piece of information about this world, is greater or less than another, but that all are equal as the angels. So with the utmost seriousness I looked up any word I thought upon—pins, nutmegs, wallaby (it's a terrible game!) and gorged. I winced at nothing. I rejected nothing. I raked over even the filth, determined that no nastiness should escape my mind: I

studied syphilis and politics, parasitology and crime, and, like Sir Thomas Browne, soon discovered that I could digest a salad gathered in a churchyard as easily as one in a garden.

## VII

I have long since given up the idea of hiding away from life in a museum or a library. Life seeks you out wherever you are. For the diarist, the most commonplace things of daily life are of absorbing interest. Each day the diarist finds himself born into a world as strange and beautiful as the dead world of the day before. The diarist lives on the globe for all the world as if he lodged on the slopes of a mountain, and unlike most mountain dwellers, he never loses his sense of awe at his situation. Life is vivid to him. "And so to bed," writes Mr. Secretary Pepys, a hundred times in his diary; and we may be sure that each time he joined Mrs. Pepys beneath the coverlet he felt that the moment which marked the end of his wonderful day was one deserving careful record.

A man shut up in a dark room can still be living a tense and eager life. Cut off from sight and sound, he still can sit in his chair and listen to the beatings of his own heart—that wonderful muscle inside the cage of the thorax, working and moving like some independent entity, some *other person*, upon whom the favor of our daily life depends. The human body, what a wonderful mechanism it is! It never ceases to astonish me that anyone, on waking up in this world and finding himself in possession of a body—his only bit of real property—should be satisfied when he has clothed and fed it. One would think that the infant's first articulate request would be for a primer of physiology.

I have often wondered how a beautiful woman regards her body. The loveliness which I must seek outside myself sleeps on "the ivories of her pure members." She carries the incommunicable secret in herself, in the texture of her own skin, and the contour of her own breasts. She is guardian of the hidden treasure which fills the flowers and lives in the sunset. How must it be to possess so burning a secret hidden even to the possessor? What must she think on looking into the glass?

I look into the glass, and am baffled by the intolerable strangeness that that face is mine, that I am I, that my name is Barbellion. It is easy, too fatally easy, to continue exploring the recesses of one's own life and mind day by day, making fresh discoveries, opening up new tracts, and on occasion getting a sight of blue mountain ranges in the distance whither we endeavor to arrive.

## VIII

Life is beautiful and strange. Too beautiful, too strange. I sometimes envy those folk whom I see daily accepting life without question or wonder-

ment as a homely fireside affair—except of course for some unusual places like the Niagara Falls, only to be visited on a holiday, or for some unpleasant tragedies they read about in the newspapers. It would be useless to put to them the ultimate and staggering question why anything exists at all—"Why not sheer negation?"—to the folk who find their circumstances so dull that they have to play with bat and ball to fend off ennui, who are always in search of what is known as a "pastime," or who invite children to stay with them "to keep them alive," as they explain, as if there were not enough weeping, wondering, and laughing to be done in this blessed world to keep us all alive and throbbing! Life has ceased to be an intoxication for them. It is just a mild illusion, in which they attend to the slugs in the strawberry beds and get in that extra hundredweight of coal, accepting the bountiful flow of still, calm, happy days as their due and, like spoiled children, feeling bored with them. Yet confront these dormice with a slice of life and they will blink and scamper off. Show them a woman suckling a baby or a dirty man drinking beer, and they will raise their eyebrows or blench. There is no limit to their fear of living. They are nervous of their appetites and instincts; they will not eat themselves into a bilious attack nor smoke themselves into a weak heart. They fear either to love or to hate unreservedly. Men like Baudelaire and Villon terrify them, liner disasters and earthquakes send them trembling to their knees and books of devotion. They will not brazen life out. Let them come out of their houses and seek courage in the thunder of the surf on the seashore, or amid the tall majestic columns of the strong Scots pines, whose lower branches spread down and outward graciously like friendly hands to frightened children. How many times have I sought sanctuary among the tall Scots pines!

## IX

Courage, I know, is necessary. Let us pray for courage, if we are to regard without flinching our amazing situation on this island planet where we are marooned. Amid the island's noise and rapture, struggle, and vicissitude, we must wrestle with the forces of nature for our happiness. True happiness is the spoil of conquest seized out of the clutches of furious life. We must pay for it with a price. That which is given away contains no value. Tall cliffs, a dancing sea, and the sun glorious perhaps. Yes, but simple enjoyment of that kind is a Pyrrhic victory. The real victor must exult in the menace of two hundred feet of sheer, perpendicular rock surface; and when he bathes, remember that the sea has talons, and that the glorious sun itself, what is it? A globe of incandescent heat, compared with which the blast furnaces of Sheffield are only warm, and around which our earth ever keeps on its dizzy mothlike circle.

I am far from believing that the world is a paradise of sea bathing and horse exercise, as R. L. S. said. That is a piece of typical Stevensonian bravura.

It is a rare gymnasium, to be sure; but it is also a blood-spattered abattoir, a theatre of pain, an anabasis of travail, a Calvary and a Crucifixion. Therein lies its extraordinary fascination—in those strange antitheses of comedy and tragedy, joy and sorrow, beauty and ugliness. It is the sock one day and the buskin the next. Marriage sheet and shroud are inextricably interwoven. Like a beautiful and terrible mistress, the world holds me its devoted slave. She flouts me, but I love her still. She is cruel, but still I love her. My love for her is a guilty love—for the voluptuous curves of the Devonshire moors, for the bland benignity of the sun smiling alike on the just and on the unjust, for the sea which washes in a beautiful shell or a corpse with the same meditative indifference.

There are many things I ought to scowl upon. But I cannot. The spell is too great. I surprise myself sometimes with my callous exuberation at the triumph of brute force, at some of the grotesque melodramas engineered by Fate—for, in spite of Thomas Hardy and Greek tragedy, Fate is often but a sorry artist—at the splendid hypocrisy of many persons even in high places, or when I learn that a whole army has been “cut to pieces.” I rub my hands, murmuring in ironical delight, “It is simply colossal.” Marlowe, I believe, drew Barabbas out of sheer love of his wickedness. Shakespeare surely exulted in the unspeakable tragedy of King Lear.

I have been too long now in love with this wicked old earth to wish to change one jot or one tittle of it. I am loath to surrender even the Putumayo atrocities. Let me have Crippen as well as Father Damien, Heliogabalus as well as Marcus Aurelius. Liars and vagabonds are the salt of the earth. Who wants Benvenuto Cellini to tell the truth? What missionary spirit feels tempted to reclaim Aretino or Laurence Sterne? The man who wrote of “the pitiful end” of Marlowe, killed in a tavern brawl, bores me with his peevishness. It is silly to repine because Keats died young or because Poe drank himself to death. This kind of jejune lament from the people who live in garden cities soon becomes very monotonous indeed. Tragedy and comedy, I thought we were all agreed, are the warp and woof of life, and if we have agreed to accept life and accept it fully, let us stand by our compact and whoop like cowboys on the plains. Who wants to be pampered with divine or miraculous intervention? We are too proud. Let the world run on. We can manage. If you suffer, at least you live, said Balzac. So Heine and Schubert out of their great sorrows wrote their little songs, and out of Amiel’s life of wasted opportunity came the *Journal*, to give the lie to those who do not hold it to be as much a triumph to fail as to succeed, to despair as to win through with joy.



## AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1881)*

BOSWELL: We grow weary when idle.

JOHNSON: That is, sir, because, others being busy, we want company; but if we were all idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another.

JUST now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse-respectability*, to enter on some lucrative profession, and labor therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savors a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and in the emphatic Americanism, "goes for" them. And while such an one is plowing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for these tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have labored along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favor of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honors with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterward have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt.

And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thoughts.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truancy that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-luster periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favorite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:

"How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is not this the hour of the class? and should'st thou not be plying thy book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spread its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx, which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix, which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanor, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the

idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere of Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many firelit parlors; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk: they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralyzed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have

clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuffbox empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theater of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theater, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stock-broker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favor has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater, if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favor is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise

nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humor; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Livableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office, than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scapegrace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life," why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a

pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labor themselves into a great fortune and hence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and center-point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they gave away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

## THE SAILOR AND THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Irwin Edman (1938)

OCCASIONALLY one writes something that seems to a few readers in far places to be addressed directly to them, to speak specifically of them, and they are moved to write to the author as to an unknown friend. In 1926 I published an imaginary portrait called *Richard Kane Looks at Life*. It was an attempt to give a picture of the awakening mind of the more sensitive American college student. I mention it here because, had I not published it, I should never have come to know Jewell V. Jones, able seaman, and I should not be writing of him now.

I had received a whole sheaf of letters from young men and women just in college or just out of it or ten years after their degree. How did I know? I had written their autobiography. It was gratifying, of course, to believe that without realizing it I had written the pattern of the spiritual problems of young women in South Carolina and young men in California, in both of which places I had never been. The letters followed, on the whole, identical patterns, and I became anesthetized to them. But there came in the mail one morning a communication that arrested my attention, first by the address at its head, and secondly by the unexpected background of the writer, and by a certain curiosity-provoking élan in the writing. If I had known I was some

day going to write my recollections I might have kept it. But the force of necessity—near-sightedness—has blessed me, *per forza*, as the Italians say, with a good memory, and I believe the letter ran substantially as follows:

Brooklyn Navy Yard,  
Dec. 5, 1926.

Dear Sir,

*I am a gob in the United States Navy, twenty-six years old. I have been in the Navy four years and I have just re-enlisted. Before enlisting for the first time, I had bummed around the country on various odd jobs, trucking, dish-washing, etc. I was one of seven children in a white trash family in the mountains of Kentucky. So you see the accidents of my life are not Richard Kane's, but in essence you have written my autobiography.*

The letter continued to say that Mencken might shout and Will Durant might bawl (the *Story of Philosophy* was then all the rage), John Erskine might smile his deep, knowing smile about life (*The Private Life of Helen of Troy* had appeared the year before), but there were certain things I had done that were unparalleled in American literature. Among others I was clearly "America's master of alliteration."

The source, the tone, the strange medley of directness and rhetoric, of insight and naïveté, prompted me to wonder about Jewell V. Jones. I think I was especially taken by the philosophical sentence about essence and accidents. How did that get into the vocabulary of a gob with such a history? I looked at the address again. Brooklyn Navy Yard. Perhaps the U.S.S. *Detroit* was still in port. I wrote a note to Jewell V. Jones inviting him to come to see me. The letter had said, apparently wistfully, that he had never had any personal relations with a writer in his life.

A few days later I received the following reply:

*Three days ago I wrote you a sincerely appreciative letter. In return I received a two-page typewritten outline, headed "Experience and Metaphysics." It was unsigned. But I can think of nobody except you who would conceivably write to me who would be interested in such matters. Is it an oracular and mystical way of giving me advice, or is it simply a piece of professional absent-mindedness?*

I had already discovered my mistake the evening before at Cooper Union, where I had taken out of my portfolio not the notes I meant to have brought with me, but a note to Jewell V. Jones. It had not been fatal. One sometimes gives a better lecture for having forgotten one's notes. The letter killeth. I tried again. I wrote again asking Mr. Jones if he would telephone me and let me know whether he could come to dinner with me, and when. The next evening about ten-thirty the telephone rang. He was sorry to telephone so late



but he had just got off the boat. He had asked the operator to "ring softly" lest I be already asleep. It was a soft Southern drawl that came over the wire.

"You really don't want to see me, sir. I should only bore you. I have nothing to say. I'd like to listen, but I'm afraid you're much too busy."

I insisted.

Promptly the next evening, at seven to the dot per appointment, there was a vigorous ring at the doorbell of my apartment. I opened the door to see standing before me in a gob's uniform a powerfully built young man, six foot three at least, with a gentle expression and, I could not help observing, a pair of strong, enormously large hands, one of which firmly gripped mine. Mr. Jones came in diffidently.

"I could not make up my mind whether or not you'd be embarrassed by my coming in my uniform," he drawled hesitantly. "I know what people think of sailors."

"How absurd, Mr. Jones!" I said. "It's late and perhaps you are hungry; let's go over to the Faculty Club, which is close by, and talk at dinner."

"Oh, no," he said with a look of genuine alarm, "then they'll *surely* think you're the most idiosyncratic professor at Columbia."

"I don't like the 'surely,'" I said.

But Mr. Jones was firm. He would not imperil an academic reputation by coming to the Faculty Club in sailor's uniform as my guest. We went to a restaurant in the neighborhood and returned to the apartment after dinner. Jewell V. Jones told me a good deal about his education, which was largely of his own making, and of his reasons, quite considered, for going into the Navy and staying there. Ever since he could remember he had been interested vaguely in philosophical questions. What it was all about, what one could believe, what one meant by time and by the good life. He had knocked about the country for years, and nothing seemed to come of his life. He had no particular ambitions, save that of understanding existence and making a contemplative peace with it. It had dawned on him that the Navy would be just the thing. If it had been the Middle Ages, he said, he would have gone into a monastery. American life was full of hasty ambition; it led nowhere when successful, and he doubted that he would have been successful. The Navy was the perfect thing for him. He was in the Signal Corps where they had plenty of leisure, and a light to read by. He could read hours at a stretch and could have the spaces of the long days at sea for thinking. He had thought about a lot of things: God, freedom, immortality, and, well, the state of the world.

"Do you have much trouble getting books?" I asked.

"That's just the trouble," he said. "I can't buy many, and I don't quite know what to buy. But I subscribe to all the—what do they call them?—quality magazines: the *Atlantic*, the *Century*, *Scribner's*, the *Nation*, etc. I read *Richard Kane* when it came out in the *Century*. I lent it to the captain. And when I am in New York there's a fair library at the Soldiers' and Sailors'

Club, and of course I go to the New York Public Library at Forty-Second Street."

"But you must want people to talk to about the things that seem to interest you," I said. "Surely you don't find many contemplative philosophers on board the cruiser *Detroit*."

"No, I don't; but I get along well with my shipmates. I'm young, too, you know, and we're all full of animal spirits. They're nice chaps. Most of them are in the Navy because they couldn't stand being at home any more. Many of them have stepmothers."

"Do any of your companions know about these intellectual interests of yours?" I asked. "Don't some of them regard them as a little queer?"

"Oh, they notice I read a lot, and they think it's some kind of deep stuff. They sometimes tease me about it. They call me the Professor."

"I don't suppose they ever ask you about such things, do they?"

"Oh, once in a while. You know a group of men, if they talk long enough, hit upon what you call somewhere Ultimate Things. I heard some of them discussing the belief in a future life one day, and one of them said: 'Ask Jones; he knows.'"

"You know as much about that as most authorities on the subject," I suggested.

At half-past nine a friend of mine dropped in unexpectedly. He had been an officer in the Navy during the war. Jones and he talked shop a little. Suddenly, to my friend's amusement and to my embarrassment, the sailor turned to my friend and, leaning forward, said:

"Mr. Burrill, don't you think Mr. Edman writes well?"

My friend said, smiling, that he thought I did, sometimes.

"But I mean," persisted Mr. Jones, "don't you like his lyric flights?"

"When they're controlled flights," was the reply. My visitor had only the day before pointed out a page in which I had, as he put it, "gone roller skating on the rainbow."

"Controlled flights," said Sailor Jones with impatience, and rose and spat on the floor. There are all stages of definitiveness in criticism. Jones was more forthright than most reviewers.

The talk drifted to music, and I played some, a new record of Mozart's Minuet from *Don Giovanni*. The sailor listened attentively. "I wish I could hear more music," he said.

As he was leaving that evening, he said: "This is the first time in my life I have spoken to a person who really lives with the things I am interested in. I am very grateful. But I am going to ask a favour. You know you asked me before, whom I can talk to about the things that I like to think about. Well, there is really no one. I have a girl friend in Florida; she's a stenographer. I put a lot into letters to her that I am not sure she cares much to read. Just to get it out of my system. Might I write to you occasionally? I know you're busy and won't have time to answer, and I know my letters will sound simple-

mininded. But it would help me to get it out of my system onto paper. Do you mind? You needn't answer; my letters will be frequent and they'll be long."

"I should be delighted," I said, "and I shall answer as often as I can. And you must come to see me whenever you are in port."

"It won't be often," he said; "we're off next week for manœuvres in the Pacific; you know, you've been reading about it in the papers, in the interest of peace."

From then on, from time to time, I would get long letters from Jewell, single-spaced, typewritten, full of his comments on everything he had been thinking and reading about. They were strange blends of perception and simple-mindedness. He had all the faults of the self-educated man as well as his virtues. There would be *bravura* phrases followed by grammatical mistakes, and a ruthless devastation of Eddington or Jeans followed by a piece of sentimental mysticism or innocence. "I read your article on Spinoza in the *Sunday Times*," he wrote once; "I have sent it to my girl friend in Florida." Or, again: "We have arrived in Oporto after a week's simulated naval warfare at sea. I found my February *Atlantic* awaiting me. In it concludes Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch's *The Modern Temper*. The editor of the *Atlantic* remarks it is now an open season for Joseph Wood Krutch. Well, I shall begin. I think Mr. Krutch's pessimism is just a form of a masochism thinly disguised. I wish somebody would remind him that the question, 'Is life worth living?', as Samuel Butler puts it, is a question fit for an embryo, not for a man." There would be disquisitions on what was wrong with sea writers and why he didn't propose to become one. There would be inquiries as to how a naturalistic philosophy (such as I had recently outlined in the *Nation* under the title of "The New Naturalism") could ever give a comprehensive meaning to life in the way that the older theologies or metaphysical idealisms did. There would be Whitmanesque pæans, though he did not like Whitman, on the self-justification of being young and healthy and content in the sun.

It was some months before I saw my sailor friend again. He had telephoned that he was in New York and I had invited him to Sunday dinner at one. It was one-thirty when he came rushing in, browned, hatless, coatless, flurried, and a large package under his arm.

"I'm sorry to be late," he said. He handed me the package. "This is for you. I forgot it at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club and I was afraid I'd be late, so I took a taxi back there and up here. Well, I'm pretty late anyhow."

"You shouldn't spend money like this on me," I said.

"You know us sailors; when we're in town we spend money wildly, and I choose to spend it like this. It's my own funeral."

He had brought the Beethoven *Third Symphony*. I was touched and embarrassed.

"Have you ever," I said with a sudden idea, "been to a symphony concert?"

"Never," he said.

"Will you come with me this afternoon—I have two tickets—unless you have other plans?"

"We each have a complex," he said. "Mine is that my uniform embarrasses you; yours is that I'd rather be somewhere else when I'm here."

Jewell was quite excited by the sight of the orchestra (he was surprised to find it actually on the stage); he looked a little self-conscious when I introduced him to a friend in the row in front of us. He settled down with the most complete attention when the orchestra launched into the singing theme that begins Brahms's *Third Symphony*. I quite forgot my guest during the music. There is nothing so engulfing as waves of orchestral sound when one is in the mood and the orchestra is in the vein. And there were certain things, besides, I was watching for in the score. I wanted to be sure not to miss that final ingenious quietude in which, high on the violins, Brahms repeats at the end of the fourth movement what he had sung full-throatedly on at the beginning.

During the intermission Jewell said very little, except to remark that he had not known that there could be so much and such rich sound in the world.

The second half of the programme consisted of excerpts from Wagner, the usual things: The Ride of the Valkyries, the Siegfried Rhine Journey, the Prelude to the *Meistersinger*. The sound of the old war horses galloping on a Sunday afternoon did not promise too much, and I was in any case tired musically from having tried to listen to everything that was going on in the Brahms. My attention wandered every now and then to Sailor Jones. He certainly had no attention for me. He sat forward listening as if there were no other world and no other being save those poignant violins and imperative trombones, and with the climax of the *Meistersinger* he could scarcely contain himself.

"Boy!" he said when he had finally stopped applauding, "that Wagner certainly could whoop it up. What a man! Do you think we could get him to play it again?"

I said it was extremely unlikely.

"Come and have the sailor's delight with me," Jewell said as we walked out, "coffee and a ham sandwich."

We went to a near-by cafeteria. It was a mild day, prescient of spring. Jewell was lost in reflection. After he had finished his coffee in silence, he lit a cigarette, and smoked on without a word.

"How did you like the concert?" I said to him. Except for the exclamation about Wagner, he had said not a word about it.

"Well, frankly, I didn't get much out of the Brahms; that went over my head. But the Wagner didn't" (he pronounced the name as if it were English); "that had all the obviousness of ecstasy." And then with no apparent connexion he asked suddenly: "Do you ever read the Gospel of St. John?"

"Sometimes"

"Remember what he says about the Word become Flesh? It's a wonderful phrase and it tells a lot about writing. The Word become Flesh. Some writing is that. Touched with flame, certain writing is. The spirit become incarnate. You can tell at once the real thing from the fake. That Wagner music has it: touched with flame. And if a writer doesn't have it, I can't read him very much. Will you have another cup of coffee?"

"You don't propose to stay in the Navy all your life, Jewell?" I said when he turned up once a few months later and had been talking as usual about books and ideas.

"Well, I'm in it for the present. Then I don't know. Don't tell me I ought to write. I know I wouldn't have enough to say and I really wouldn't know how to say it very well. It's different just writing letters. I really am happy in the Navy, though everybody tells me to get out of it. There's an old lady who comes down to give us coffee and cake at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club. She talked with me for a while and said: 'But why are you in the Navy? You should be writing or studying.' 'Ma'am,' I said, 'just let me stay in the Navy. It's a good place to be one's self; that's awfully hard on land.' I've tried to think of what job I could find on land, and I think I've thought of one. When my term in the Navy expires, I'm going to become a Borden's milkman, right here in New York, if I can."

"But why a milkman?"

"It would give me my days free, and I would have a chance to read in the libraries and it'd keep me out of the distractions. Of course, I don't know how my girl friend—she's a stenographer in Florida now—will like it. You know we're going to be married one of these days."

"Is she interested in the contemplative life?" I asked.

"No, but she's learning, and I've told her a lot, and she's glad that I am."

I did not hear from Jewell for quite a long time. He finally wrote me that he had decided that it wasn't fair taking up my time when he came to town; he had nothing to offer and it was no use pretending: the chasm between those who had really been educated and those who hadn't was too profound. I had been very kind and he would remember me always, but I had enough to do, and hadn't too much energy. He wished he could lend me some of his vitality; perhaps I wouldn't always be having the colds I seemed to have whenever he turned up in New York.

I wrote him a letter explaining there was only one community and that was of the mind, and we were both members of it. He came again when he was in port.

About a year later, faithful Maria, who takes care of my apartment, told me a milkman, not the regular one but one she had never seen before, wished to see me. It was Jewell. He looked odd in his milkman's cap and white jacket, but the same healthy being as before.

"I've got the job," he said.

"I'm delighted to see you again," I said. "And how's the life of the spirit on shore?"

"Fair," he said, "but there are distractions, pleasant ones. I'm married now to the girl friend in Florida."

Jewell has been married some years now. There is a little boy who bears the writer's name. Jewell seems happy, though less exuberantly than of old, and he finds it difficult, he tells me when I see him, to keep up with ideas now. "And philosophical ideas don't seem such cures for the world as I used to think," he said, "not the world I see around me on shore and read about in the papers."

I gathered that on a milkman's wages and with a wife to support and a child to bring up, things in general are not touched with flame, nor is ecstasy as obvious any more.

## THE MEN

*Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1939)*

MERMOZ is one airplane pilot, and Guillaumet another, of whom I shall write briefly in order that you may see clearly what I mean when I say in the mould of this new profession a new breed of men has been cast.

### I

A handful of pilots, of whom Mermoz was one, surveyed the Casablanca-Dakar line across the territory inhabited by the refractory tribes of the Sahara. Motors in those days being what they were, Mermoz was taken prisoner one day by the Moors. The tribesmen were unable to make up their minds to kill him, kept him a captive a fortnight, and he was eventually ransomed. Whereupon he continued to fly over the same territory.

When the South American line was opened up Mermoz, ever the pioneer, was given the job of surveying the division between Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile. He who had flung a bridge over the Sahara was now to do the same over the Andes. They had given him a plane whose absolute ceiling was sixteen thousand feet and had asked him to fly it over a mountain range that rose more than twenty thousand feet into the air. His job was to search for gaps in the Cordilleras. He who had studied the face of the sands was now to learn the contours of the peaks, those crags whose scarfs of snow flutter restlessly in the winds, whose surfaces are bleached white in the storms, whose blustering gusts sweep through the narrow walls of their rocky corridors and force the pilot to a sort of hand-to-hand combat. Mermoz enrolled

in this war in complete ignorance of his adversary, with no notion at all of the chances of coming forth alive from battle with this enemy. His job was to "try out" for the rest of us. And, "trying out" one day, he found himself prisoner of the Andes.

Mermoz and his mechanic had been forced down at an altitude of twelve thousand feet on a table-land at whose edges the mountain dropped sheer on all sides. For two mortal days they hunted a way off this plateau. But they were trapped. Everywhere the same sheer drop. And so they played their last card.

Themselves still in it, they sent the plane rolling and bouncing down an incline over the rocky ground until it reached the precipice, went off into air, and dropped. In falling, the plane picked up enough speed to respond to the controls. Mermoz was able to tilt its nose in the direction of a peak, sweep over the peak, and, while the water spurted through all the pipes burst by the night frost, the ship already disabled after only seven minutes of flight, he saw beneath him like a promised land the Chilean plain.

And the next day he was at it again.

When the Andes had been thoroughly explored and the technique of the crossings perfected, Mermoz turned over this section of the line to his friend Guillaumet and set out to explore the night. The lighting of our airports had not yet been worked out. Hovering in the pitch black night, Mermoz would land by the faint glimmer of three gasoline flares lined up at one end of the field. This trick, too, he taught us, and then, having tamed the night, he tried the ocean. He was the first, in 1931, to carry the mails in four days from Toulouse to Buenos Aires. On his way home he had engine trouble over a stormy sea in mid-Atlantic. A passing steamer picked him up with his mails and his crew.

Pioneering thus Mermoz had cleared the desert, the mountains, the night, and the sea. He had been forced down more than once in desert, in mountain, in night, and in sea. And each time that he got safely home, it was but to start out again. Finally, after a dozen years of service, having taken off from Dakar bound for Natal, he radioed briefly that he was cutting off his rear right-hand engine. Then silence.

There was nothing particularly disturbing in this news. Nevertheless, when ten minutes had gone by without report there began for every radio station on the South Atlantic line, from Paris to Buenos Aires, a period of anxious vigil. It would be ridiculous to worry over someone ten minutes late in our day-to-day existence, but in the air-mail service ten minutes can be pregnant with meaning. At the heart of this dead slice of time an unknown event is locked up. Insignificant, it may be; a mishap, possibly: whatever it is, the event has taken place. Fate has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. An iron hand has guided a crew to a sea-landing that may have been safe and may have been disastrous. And long hours must go by before the decision of the gods is made known to those who wait.

We waited. We hoped. Like all men at some time in their lives we lived through that inordinate expectancy which like a fatal malady grows from minute to minute harder to bear. Even before the hour sounded, in our hearts many among us were already sitting up with the dead. All of us had the same vision before our eyes. It was a vision of a cockpit still inhabited by living men; but the pilot's hands were telling him very little now, and the world in which he groped and fumbled was a world he did not recognize. Behind him, in the glimmer of the cabin light, a shapeless uneasiness floated. The crew moved to and fro, discussed their plight, feigned sleep. A restless slumber it was, like the stirring of drowned men. The only element of sanity, of intelligibility, was the whirring of the three engines with its reassuring evidence that time still existed for them.

We were haunted for hours by this vision of a plane in distress. But the hands of the clock were going round and little by little it began to grow late. Slowly the truth was borne in upon us that our comrades would never return, that they were sleeping in that South Atlantic whose skies they had so often ploughed. Mermoz had done his job and slipped away to rest, like a gleaner who, having carefully bound his sheaf, lies down in the field to sleep.

When a pilot dies in the harness his death seems something that inheres in the craft itself, and in the beginning the hurt it brings is perhaps less than the pain sprung of a different death. Assuredly he has vanished, has undergone his ultimate mutation; but his presence is still not missed as deeply as we might miss bread. For in this craft we take it for granted that we shall meet together only rarely.

Airline pilots are widely dispersed over the face of the world. They land alone at scattered and remote airports, isolated from each other rather in the manner of sentinels between whom no words can be spoken. It needs the accident of journeyings to bring together here or there the dispersed members of this great professional family.

Round the table in the evening, at Casablanca, at Dakar, at Buenos Aires, we take up conversations interrupted by years of silence, we resume friendships to the accompaniment of buried memories. And then we are off again.

Thus is the earth at once a desert and a paradise, rich in secret hidden gardens, gardens inaccessible, but to which the craft leads us ever back, one day or another. Life may scatter us and keep us apart; it may prevent us from thinking very often of one another; but we know that our comrades are somewhere "out there"—where, one can hardly say—silent, forgotten, but deeply faithful. And when our path crosses theirs, they greet us with such manifest joy, shake us so gaily by the shoulders! Indeed we are accustomed to waiting.

Bit by bit, nevertheless, it comes over us that we shall never again hear the laughter of our friend, that this one garden is forever locked against us. And at that moment begins our true mourning, which, though it may not be rending, is yet a little bitter. For nothing, in truth, can replace that com-



panion. Old friends cannot be created out of hand. Nothing can match the treasure of common memories, of trials endured together, of quarrels and reconciliations and generous emotions. It is idle, having planted an acorn in the morning, to expect that afternoon to sit in the shade of the oak.

So life goes on. For years we plant the seed, we feel ourselves rich; and then come other years when time does its work and our plantation is made sparse and thin. One by one, our comrades slip away, deprive us of their shade.

This, then, is the moral taught us by Mermoz and his kind. We understand better, because of him, that what constitutes the dignity of a craft is that it creates a fellowship, that it binds men together and fashions for them a common language. For there is but one veritable problem—the problem of human relations.

We forget that there is no hope of joy except in human relations. If I summon up those memories that have left with me an enduring savor, if I draw up the balance sheet of the hours in my life that have truly counted, surely I find only those that no wealth could have procured me. True riches cannot be bought. One cannot buy the friendship of a Mermoz, of a companion to whom one is bound forever by ordeals suffered in common. There is no buying the night flight with its hundred thousand stars, its serenity, its few hours of sovereignty. It is not money that can procure for us that new vision of the world won through hardship—those trees, flowers, women, those treasures made fresh by the dew and color of life which the dawn restores to us, this concert of little things that sustain us and constitute our compensation.

Nor that night we lived through in the land of the unconquered tribes of the Sahara, which now floats into my memory.

Three crews of *Aéropostale* men had come down at the fall of day on the Rio de Oro coast in a part of the Sahara whose denizens acknowledge no European rule. Riguelle had landed first, with a broken connecting rod. Bourgat had come along to pick up Riguelle's crew, but a minor accident had nailed him to earth. Finally, as night was beginning to fall, I arrived. We decided to salvage Bourgat's ship, but we should have to spend the night and do the job of repair by daylight.

Exactly on this spot two of our comrades, Gourp and Erable, had been murdered by the tribesmen a year earlier. We knew that a raiding party of three hundred rifles was at this very moment encamped somewhere near by, round Cape Bojador. Our three landings had been visible from a great distance and the Moors must have seen us. We began a vigil which might turn out to be our last.

Altogether, there were about ten of us, pilots and mechanics, when we made ready for the night. We unloaded five or six wooden cases of merchandise out of the hold, emptied them, and set them about in a circle. At the deep end of each case, as in a sentry-box, we set a lighted candle, its flame poorly

sheltered from the wind. So in the heart of the desert, on the naked rind of the planet, in an isolation like that of the beginnings of the world, we built a village of men.

Sitting in the flickering light of the candles on this kerchief of sand, on this village square, we waited in the night. We were waiting for the rescuing dawn—or for the Moors. Something, I know not what, lent this night a savor of Christmas. We told stories, we joked, we sang songs. In the air there was that slight fever that reigns over a gaily prepared feast. And yet we were infinitely poor. Wind, sand, and stars. The austerity of Trappists. But on this badly lighted cloth, a handful of men who possessed nothing in the world but their memories were sharing invisible riches.

We had met at last. Men travel side by side for years, each locked up in his own silence or exchanging those words which carry no freight—till danger comes. Then they stand shoulder to shoulder. They discover that they belong to the same family. They wax and bloom in the recognition of fellow beings. They look at one another and smile. They are like the prisoner set free who marvels at the immensity of the sea.

Happiness! It is useless to seek it elsewhere than in this warmth of human relations. Our sordid interests imprison us within their walls. Only a comrade can grasp us by the hand and haul us free.

And these human relations must be created. One must go through an apprenticeship to learn the job. Games and risk are a help here. When we exchange manly handshakes, compete in races, join together to save one of us who is in trouble, cry aloud for help in the hour of danger—only then do we learn that we are not alone on earth.

Each man must look to himself to teach him the meaning of life. It is not something discovered: it is something moulded. These prison walls that this age of trade has built up round us, we can break down. We can still run free, call to our comrades, and marvel to hear once more, in response to our call, the pathetic chant of the human voice.

## II

Guillaumet, old friend, of you too I shall say a few words. Be sure that I shall not make you squirm with any clumsy vaunting of your courage and your professional valor. In telling the story of the most marvelous of your adventures, I am after something quite different.

There exists a quality which is nameless. It may be gravity, but the word does not satisfy me, for the quality I have in mind can be accompanied by the most cheerful gaiety. It is the quality of the carpenter face to face with his block of wood. He handles it, he takes its measure. Far from treating it frivolously, he summons all his professional virtues to do it honor.

I once read, Guillaumet, a tale in which your adventure was celebrated. I have an old score to settle with the infidel who wrote it. You were described

as abounding in the witty sallies of the street arab, as if courage consisted in demeaning oneself to schoolboy banter in the midst of danger and the hour of death. The man did not know you, Guillaumet. You never felt the need of cheapening your adversaries before confronting them. When you saw a foul storm you said to yourself, "Here is a foul storm." You accepted it, and took its measure.

These pages, Guillaumet, written out of my memory, are addressed in homage to you.

It was winter and you had been gone a week over the Andes. I had come up from farthest Patagonia to join Deley at Mendoza. For five days the two of us, each in his plane, had ransacked the mountains unavailingly. Two ships! It seemed to us that a hundred squadrons navigating for a hundred years would not have been enough to explore that endless, cloud-piercing range. We had lost all hope. The very smugglers themselves, bandits who would commit a crime for a five-peso note, refused to form a rescue party out of fear of those counterforts. "We should surely die," they said; "the Andes never give up a man in winter."

And when Deley and I landed at Santiago, the Chilean officers also advised us to give you up. "It is midwinter," they said; "even if your comrade survived the landing, he cannot have survived the night. Night in those passes changes a man into ice."

And when, a second time, I slipped between the towering walls and giant pillars of the Andes, it seemed to me I was no longer seeking, but was now sitting up with, your body in the silence of a cathedral of snow.

You had been gone a week, I say, and I was lunching between flights in a restaurant in Mendoza when a man stuck his head in the door and called out: "They've found Guillaumet!"

All the strangers in the restaurant embraced.

Ten minutes later I was off the ground, carrying two mechanics, Lefebvre and Abri. Forty minutes later I had landed alongside a road, having recognized from the air, I know not by what sign, the car in which you were being brought down from San Rafael. I remember that we cried like fools; we put our arms about a living Guillaumet, resuscitated, the author of his own miracle. And it was at that moment that you pronounced your first intelligible sentence, a speech admirable in its human pride:

"I swear that what I went through, no animal would have gone through."

Later, you told us the story. A storm that brought fifteen feet of snow in forty-eight hours down on the Chilean slope had bottled up all space and sent every other mail pilot back to his starting point. You, however, had taken off in the hope of finding a rift in the sky. You found this rift, this trap, a little to the south, and now, at twenty thousand feet, the ceiling of clouds being a couple of thousand feet below you and pierced by only the peaks, you set your course for Argentina.

Down currents sometimes fill pilots with a strange uneasiness. The engines

run on, but the ship seems to be sinking. You jockey to hold your altitude; the ship loses speed and goes mushy. And still you sink. So you give it up, afraid that you may have jockeyed too much; and you let yourself drift to right and left, striving to put at your back a favorable peak, that is, a peak off which the winds rebound as off a springboard.

And yet you go on sinking. The whole sky seems to be coming down on you. You begin to feel like the victim of some cosmic accident. You cannot land anywhere, and you try in vain to turn round and fly back into those zones where the air, as dense and solid as a pillar, had held you up. That pillar has melted away. Everything here is rotten and you slither about in a sort of universal decomposition while the cloud-bank rises apathetically, reaches your level, and swallows you up.

"It almost had me in a corner once," you explained, "but I still wasn't sure I was caught. When you get up above the clouds you run into those down currents that seem to be perfectly stationary for the simple reason that in that very high altitude they never stop flowing. Everything is queer in the upper range."

And what clouds!

"As soon as I felt I was caught I dropped the controls and grabbed my seat for fear of being flung out of the ship. The jolts were so terrible that my leather harness cut my shoulders and was ready to snap. And what with the frosting on the panes, my artificial horizon was invisible and the wind rolled me over like a hat in a road from eighteen thousand feet down to ten.

"At ten thousand I caught a glimpse of a dark horizontal blot that helped me right the ship. It was a lake, and I recognized it as what they call Laguna Diamante. I remembered that it lay at the bottom of a funnel, and that one flank of the funnel, a volcano called Maipu, ran up to about twenty thousand feet.

"There I was, safe out of the clouds; but I was still blinded by the thick whirling snow and I had to hang on to my lake if I wasn't to crash into one of the sides of the funnel. So down I went, and I flew round and round the lake, about a hundred and fifty feet above it, until I ran out of fuel. After two hours of this, I set the ship down on the snow—and over on her nose she went.

"When I dragged myself clear of her I stood up. The wind knocked me down. I stood up again. Over I went a second time. So I crawled under the cockpit and dug me out a shelter in the snow. I pulled a lot of mail sacks round me, and there I lay for two days and two nights. Then the storm blew over and I started to walk my way out. I walked for five days and four nights."

But what was there left of you, Guillaumet? We had found you again, true; but burnt to a crisp, but shriveled, but shrunk into an old woman. That same afternoon I flew you back to Mendoza, and there the cool white sheets flowed like a balm down the length of your body.

They were not enough, though. Your own foundered body was an encumbrance: you turned and twisted in your sleep, unable to find lodgment for it. I stared at your face: it was splotched and swollen, like an overripe fruit that has been repeatedly dropped on the ground.

You were dreadful to see, and you were in misery, for you had lost the beautiful tools of your work: your hands were numb and useless, and when you sat up on the edge of your bed to draw a free breath, your frozen feet hung down like two dead weights. You had not even finished your long walk back, you were still panting; and when you turned and stirred on the pillow in search of peace, a procession of images that you could not escape, a procession waiting impatiently in the wings, moved instantly into action under your skull. Across the stage of your skull it moved, and for the twentieth time you fought once more the battle against these enemies that rose up out of their ashes.

I filled you with herb-teas.

"Drink, old fellow."

"You know . . . what amazed me . . ."

Boxer victorious, but punch-drunk and scarred with blows, you were reliving your strange adventure. You could divest yourself of it only in scraps. And as you told your dark tale, I could see you trudging without ice-axe, without ropes, without provision, scaling cols fifteen thousand feet in the air, crawling on the faces of vertical walls, your hands and feet and knees bleeding in a temperature twenty degrees below zero.

Voided bit by bit of your blood, your strength, your reason, you went forward with the obstinacy of an ant, retracing your steps to go round an obstacle, picking yourself up after each fall to earth, climbing slopes that led to abysses, ceaselessly in motion and never asleep, for had you slept, from that bed of snow you would never have risen. When your foot slipped and you went down, you were up again in an instant, else had you been turned into stone. The cold was petrifying you by the minute, and the price you paid for taking a moment too much of rest, when you fell, was the agony of revivifying dead muscles in your struggle to rise to your feet.

You resisted temptation. "Amid snow," you told me, "a man loses his instinct of self-preservation. After two or three or four days of tramping, all you think about is sleep. I would long for it; but then I would say to myself, 'If my wife still believes I am alive, she must believe that I am on my feet. The boys all think I am on my feet. They have faith in me. And I am a skunk if I don't go on.'"

So you tramped on; and each day you cut out a bit more of the opening of your shoes so that your swelling and freezing feet might have room in them.

You confided to me this strange thing:

"As early as the second day, you know, the hardest job I had was to force myself not to think. The pain was too much, and I was really up against it

too hard. I had to forget that, or I shouldn't have had the heart to go on walking. But I didn't seem able to control my mind. It kept working like a turbine. Still, I could more or less choose what I was to think about. I tried to stick to some film I'd seen, or book I'd read. But the film and the book would go through my mind like lightning. And I'd be back where I was, in the snow. It never failed. So I would think about other things . . ."

There was one time, however, when, having slipped, and finding yourself stretched flat on your face in the snow, you threw in your hand. You were like a boxer emptied of all passion by a single blow, lying and listening to the seconds drop one by one into a distant universe, until the tenth second fell and there was no appeal.

"I've done my best and I can't make it. Why go on?"

All that you had to do in the world to find peace was to shut your eyes. So little was needed to blot out that world of crags and ice and snow. Let drop those miraculous eyelids and there was an end of blows, of stumbling falls, of torn muscles and burning ice, of that burden of life you were dragging along like a worn-out ox, a weight heavier than any wain or cart.

Already you were beginning to taste the relief of this snow that had now become an insidious poison, this morphia that was filling you with beatitude. Life crept out of your extremities and fled to collect round your heart while something gentle and precious snuggled in close at the centre of your being. Little by little your consciousness deserted the distant regions of your body, and your body, that beast now gorged with suffering, lay ready to participate in the indifference of marble.

Your very scruples subsided. Our cries ceased to reach you, or, more accurately, changed for you into dream-cries. You were happy now, able to respond by long confident dream-strides that carried you effortlessly toward the enchantment of the plains below. How smoothly you glided into this suddenly merciful world! Guillaumet, you miser! You had made up your mind to deny us your return, to take your pleasures selfishly without us among your white angels in the snows. And then remorse floated up from the depths of your consciousness. The dream was spoilt by the irruption of bothersome details. "I thought of my wife. She would be penniless if she couldn't collect the insurance. Yes, but the company . . ."

When a man vanishes, his legal death is postponed for four years. This awful detail was enough to blot out the other visions. You were lying face downward on a bed of snow that covered a steep mountain slope. With the coming of summer your body would be washed with this slush down into one of the thousand crevasses of the Andes. You knew that. But you also knew that some fifty yards away a rock was jutting up out of the snow. I thought, "If I get up, I may be able to reach it. And if I can prop myself against the rock, they'll find me there next summer."

Once you were on your feet again, you tramped two nights and three days. But you did not then imagine that you would go on much longer!

"I could tell by different signs that the end was coming. For instance, I had to stop every two or three hours to cut my shoes open a bit more and massage my swollen feet. Or maybe my heart would be going too fast. But I was beginning to lose my memory. I had been going on a long time when suddenly I realized that every time I stopped I forgot something. The first time it was a glove. And it was cold! I had put it down in front of me and had forgotten to pick it up. The next time it was my watch. Then my knife. Then my compass. Each time I stopped I stripped myself of something vitally important. I was becoming my own enemy! And I can't tell you how it hurt me when I found that out."

"What saves a man is to take a step. Then another step. It is always the same step, but you have to take it."

"I swear that what I went through, no animal would have gone through." This sentence, the noblest ever spoken, this sentence that defines man's place in the universe, that honors him, and re-establishes the true hierarchy, floated back into my thoughts. Finally you fell asleep. Your consciousness was abolished; but forth from this dismantled, burnt, and shattered body it was to be born again like a flower put forth gradually by the species which itself is born of the luminous pulp of the stars. The body, we may say, then, is but an honest tool, the body is but a servant. And it was in these words, Guillaumet, that you expressed your pride in the honest tool:

"With nothing to eat, after three days on my feet . . . well . . . my heart wasn't going any too well. I was crawling along the side of a sheer wall, hanging over space, digging and kicking out pockets in the ice so that I could hold on, when all of a sudden my heart conked. It hesitated. Started up again. Beat crazily. I said to myself, 'If it hesitates a moment too long, I drop.' I stayed still and listened to myself. Never, never in my life have I listened as carefully to a motor as I listened to my heart, me hanging there. I said to it: 'Come on, old boy. Go to work. Try beating a little.' That's good stuff my heart is made of. It hesitated, but it went on. You don't know how proud I was of that heart."

As I said, in that room in Mendoza where I sat with you, you fell finally into an exhausted sleep. And I thought: If we were to talk to him about his courage, Guillaumet would shrug his shoulders. But it would be just as false to extol his modesty. His place is far beyond that mediocre virtue.

If he shrugs his shoulders, it is because he is no fool. He knows that once men are caught up in an event they cease to be afraid. Only the unknown frightens men. But once a man has faced the unknown, that terror becomes the known.

Especially if it is scrutinized with Guillaumet's lucid gravity. Guillaumet's courage is in the main the product of his honesty. But even this is not his fundamental quality. His moral greatness consists in his sense of responsibility. He knew that he was responsible for himself, for the mails, for the fulfilment of the hopes of his comrades; He was holding in his hands their sorrow and

their joy. He was responsible for that new element which the living were constructing and in which he was a participant. Responsible, in as much as his work contributed to it, for the fate of those men.

Guillaumet was one among those bold and generous men who had taken upon themselves the task of spreading their foliage over bold and generous horizons. To be a man is, precisely, to be responsible. It is to feel shame at the sight of what seems to be unmerited misery. It is to take pride in a victory won by one's comrades. It is to feel, when setting one's stone, that one is contributing to the building of the world.

There is a tendency to class such men with torcadors and gamblers. People extol their contempt for death. But I would not give a fig for anybody's contempt for death. If its roots are not sunk deep in an acceptance of responsibility, this contempt for death is the sign either of an impoverished soul or of youthful extravagance.

I once knew a young suicide. I cannot remember what disappointment in love it was which induced him to send a bullet carefully into his heart. I have no notion what literary temptation he had succumbed to when he drew on a pair of white gloves before the shot. But I remember having felt, on learning of this sorry show, an impression not of nobility but of lack of dignity. So! Behind that attractive face, beneath that skull which should have been a treasure chest, there had been nothing, nothing at all. Unless it was the vision of some silly little girl indistinguishable from the rest.

And when I heard of this meagre destiny, I remembered the death of a man. He was a gardener, and he was speaking on his deathbed: "You know, I used to sweat sometimes when I was digging. My rheumatism would pull at my leg, and I would damn myself for a slave. And now, do you know, I'd like to spade and spade. It's beautiful work. A man is free when he is using a spade. And besides, who is going to prune my trees when I am gone?"

That man was leaving behind him a fallow field, a fallow planet. He was bound by ties of love to all cultivable land and to all the trees of the earth. There was a generous man, a prodigal man, a nobleman! There was a man who, battling against death in the name of his Creation, could like Guillaumet be called a man of courage!

## WHAT I BELIEVE

*Lewis Mumford (1931)*

BETWEEN one's conscious philosophy and the faith that one lives by there is a greater or smaller gap, as the first becomes more deeply integrated with one's nature, and as the second rises to completer expression. In a harmonious life, the intellectual formula and the inner impetus would be one; but such harmony is far to seek. There are professed Christians, perhaps honest in their



intellectual convictions, who have never had a single natural impulse to live in charity and peace. In *Androcles and the Lion*, Bernard Shaw confronted one of these creatures with the temptation to exercise his physical strength in combat and overthrew in a moment all his dearly prized beliefs: the powerful Ferrovius had a conscious philosophy which neither emerged from nor properly disciplined the man that he was; the discrepancy was too great, the points of contact too infrequent. The result of holding such a system is either perpetual conflict or perpetual hypocrisy.

Within the norms of society, every man must find his own living philosophy. This is more than the sum of one's beliefs, judgments, standards, axioms, put together in an orderly system: it is rather a resolution of one's abstract plan of living with the circumstances and emergencies of actual existence. An adequate philosophy ought to bring together one's scheme of living, one's conscious reflections, and the inner go of the self. While it faces the evils of existence, it should recognize and consciously multiply the goods. What are these goods? Where are they to be found, and how are they to be embodied?

Most of the ethical philosophies of the past have sought to isolate the goods of life and to make one or another of them supreme: they have looked upon pleasure or efficiency or duty or sacrifice or imperturbability or self-annihilation or decorum as the chief end of a disciplined and cultivated spirit. Since no one goes through the world unhurt, and since violence and injustice have often had the upper hand, they have sometimes sought by a system of supernatural bookkeeping to redress the evils of earthly existence in another sphere; but to seek pleasure or immortality or happiness has been the common goal of these faiths—if not now, then hereafter.

There is no sanction in my philosophy for any single set of ends or goals. The fact that sunshine is beneficial to the body does not make the Sahara an ideal place to live in; and no single principle will produce an harmonious and well-balanced life. Values emerge from life at all its levels: there is virtue, as Plato saw, in the good shoemaker, just as much as there is in the philosophic guardians of the Republic; and just as a well-organized state would destroy the foundations of its existence if all its members became philosophers, which is very much what happened in our American Brook Farm experiment, so no particular function or good can gather exhaustively to itself all the possibilities of existence. To despise the animal basis of life, to seek value only at the level of conscious intelligence and rational effort, is ultimately to lose one's sense of cosmic relationships; and without this sense a noble consciousness of human destiny, higher and wider than any merely human institution, has never arisen.

Instead of framing our philosophy around an abstract end, and reproaching the universe because it appears indifferent to the particular goal we have erected, it would be wiser to begin with the nature of life itself, and to observe at what point one good or another does in fact emerge from it.

One knows life, not as a fact in the raw, but only as one is born into human society and uses the tools and instruments society has developed through history: words, symbols, grammar, logic, science, art. One finds oneself within a human world of values; and only as a result of persistent inquiry and experiment does one reach such a useful concept as that of a physical universe, considered as self-existent and apart from these values. Logically, one may begin with an abstract system of space-time relations, or with the conception of a lifeless physical universe of matter in motion, and one may build up a succession of steps culminating in human consciousness and value; but in actuality, it is with the complete tissue of experience that one begins, and only by steadily sloughing off personality, myth, human relevance can one descend to a universe from which one has voluntarily abstracted oneself.

This orientation is important. If it is correct, values are not accidental to experience, nor are they merely ornaments added to the brutal body of existence, as in a bad piece of architecture, without affecting either the function or the design: values are, on the contrary, present from the beginning, and they exercise a determining influence over every stage of life and thought.

If the physical universe does not, as a separate concept, imply life and value, it is nevertheless true that human value implies the physical universe: hence the preoccupation with the stars and with cosmic destiny that pervades almost every religion, even that austere and attenuated form associated with modern positive science. The vague stir within us, which we associate with the beat of our hearts and the expansion of our lungs, requires for sustenance a whole solar system, merely to maintain such elementary relations as the heat of our blood. Similarly, the crudest social existence implies the effort of untold generations of men to differentiate foods from poisons, invent tools, devise shelters, create symbols, signs, and gestures, and build up a body of communicable experience.

Individualism in the sense of isolation is merely a spatial illusion. The more self-sufficient an individual seems to be, the more sure it is that, like Thoreau at Walden Pond, he carries a whole society in his bosom. This fact applies equally to nations. Both physically and spiritually we are members one of another; and we have never been anything else, although the callosities of ignorance and egotism have sometimes made us insensitive to this condition. This sense of cosmic interdependence is both one's ultimate intuition about the universe and the most direct key to its practical activities; for the cosmic sense probably grew originally out of the realities of social life itself, the oneness of the tribe; of parent and child, of husband and wife. Without this sense, man is a defiant atom, awaiting annihilation—a cruel joke in a mirthless world.

Life begins then with a tissue of inherited values. Only by hard effort and experiment does one reach the matter-of-fact plane; indeed, the sense of a neutral world, untouched by man's efforts, indifferent to his activities,

obdurate to wish and supplication, is one of the supreme triumphs of his imagination, and in itself represents a fresh human value.

Thought, social relations, biological activities, cosmic backgrounds—all call for a system of manifold coöperations, and the finer life becomes, the more complicated is this network, and the more highly conscious must one become of one's relations within it. Goethe once put the case admirably in a conversation with Eckermann: "People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and keeps on to the end. What can we call ours, except energy, strength, will? If I could give an account of what I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small remainder." The person who fancies he has made his own career, or the inventor who believes he has the sole right to his invention, or the philosopher who announces a completely new system of thought, is merely ignorant of his sources. Darwin formulated his *Origin of Species* with the sense of having made a unique personal discovery; before he was finished the similar hypothesis of another young naturalist, Wallace, was brought to his attention; by the time he published his second edition, he had at last become aware that a whole literature on evolution had preceded his announcement. The individual contribution, the work of any single generation, is infinitesimal; the power and glory belong to human society at large, and are the long result of time.

This is the philosophic justification for communism. Since it coincides with the practical reason for communism—namely, that every human being requires approximately the same share of air, water, clothing, food, shelter, and the prevailing material culture, with small differences to allow for climate and occupation—the political institutions of society should be arranged to establish this minimum basis of life. Differentiation and preference and special incentive should be taken into account only after the security and continuity of life itself is assured. This is my fundamental political faith: it corresponds roughly to Plato's. Necessarily, the task of organizing a basic communism is not an easy one, particularly in an industrial world where so many steps intervene between the land and the raw resources of nature and the ultimate products that must be made available. While special societies like monasteries and armies have often achieved a rough measure of communism, the real difficulty is to apply the method to the community at large and still preserve those delicate volitions and intense individual interests which are an incentive to creative activity.

One of the first moves in this direction is to alter by example and education the current scheme of values. In our present Western societies, with the exception of Soviet Russia, pecuniary prestige and property interests come first; life, and the values derived from actual living, exist on sufferance, or are scourged out of existence. Love, art, poetry, disinterested thought, the free use of the imagination, the pursuit of non-utilitarian activities and the enjoyment of non-consumable goods—all these things do not come within

the dominant pecuniary scale of values, and are falsified and belittled by any such association. Yet a life that does not enter into their realm is a life that has never fully come to flower: the means and instruments of daily activity, which are sanctified by the existence of these deeper values, are bereft of even their proper significance by being condemned to serve as substitutes for the whole.

While a basic economic communism, which would extend to the whole community the decent practices of the household, seems to me a necessary measure of justice and practical statesmanship, one need not therefore hold, with an older school of revolutionary thinkers, that the evils of life are entirely the work of an ominous capitalist class, or that they are entirely economic in origin and would be abolished under a more humane régime.

On the contrary, I have no more notion of abolishing evil than I have of abolishing shadow in a world of light. Fourier's belief that the ocean itself under a harmonized social order might turn into lemonade and Spencer's picture of the future society as a sort of polite eternal Sunday afternoon are merely exhibitions, as it were, of an unfathomable shallowness. Evil and good are phases in the process of growth; and who shall say which is the better teacher? Illness, error, defeat, frustration, disintegration, malicious accident, all these elements are as much in the process of life as waste, nutrition, and repair. The very forces which, if triumphant, would destroy life are needful to season experience and deepen understanding. The virtuous man aims, not at the abstract condition of goodness, but at a life abundant: his success lies, not in escaping evil, as the Brahmin avoids taking life by having even the insects swept out of his path, but by turning it to the account of the vital process itself.

Observing the role of evil, the greater religions of the past have celebrated almost solely the negative aspects of existence. They have confronted death and extinction in all their forms, and have been concerned above all with the relief of the ailing and the release of the transgressor. In reaction against the superstitious element in these religions, one must not commit the opposite error of ignoring the function of evil in the vital economy. The goods of life have large capacities for mischief. Who has not observed the charity that poisons the giver, and the brotherhood that is based upon hatred of the outsider? In fact, nothing needs such constant watching and revision as the practice of the virtues: before one realizes it, as Emerson pointed out in *Uriel*, goods become evils. But similarly, the evils of life have a large capacity for good; and the mature person knows that they must be faced, embraced, assimilated; that to shun them or innocently hope to eliminate them altogether is to cling to an existence that is both false to reality and essentially lacking in perspective and depth. Like arsenic, evil is a tonic in grains and a poison in ounces. The real problem of evil, the problem that justifies every assault upon war and poverty and disease, is to reduce it to amounts that can be spiritually assimilated.

This doctrine is just the opposite of certain "optimistic" life-denying attitudes and habits of mind that have become popular during the last three centuries; particularly, the notion that comfort, safety, the absence of physical disease are the greatest blessings of civilization, and that as they increase evil will be automatically abolished. The fallacy of this view lies in the fact that comfort and safety are not absolute qualities, but are capable of defeating life quite as thoroughly as hardship and disease and uncertainty; and the notion that every other human interest, religion, art, friendship, love, must be subordinated to the production of increasing amounts of comforts and luxuries is merely one of the dark superstitions of our money-bent utilitarian society. By accepting this superstition as an essential modern creed, the utilitarian has turned an elementary condition of existence, the necessity for providing for the physical basis of life, into an end. Avaricious of power and riches and goods, he has summoned to his aid the resources of modern science and technology. As a result, we are oriented to "things," and have every sort of possession except self-possession. By putting business before every other manifestation of life, our mechanical and financial civilization has forgotten the chief business of life, namely, growth, reproduction, development. It pays infinite attention to the incubator—and it forgets the egg.

Now, the end of all practical activity is culture: a maturing mind, a ripening character, an increasing sense of mastery and fulfillment, a higher integration of all one's powers in a social personality, a larger capacity for intellectual interests and emotional enjoyments, for more complex and subtle states of mind. In part, the interests of culture are served directly by participation in a workaday activity, and in part, they emerge from it and independently preside over it. Arrested personalities look back, perhaps, with regret to some temporary fulfillment in youth, as Mark Twain looked back to the happy adventures of Huckleberry Finn; whereas developing personalities accept, without impatience or regret, the next stage in their growth; and by the time they are men, they have no difficulty in putting away childish things.

Growth and culture imply both activity and periods of leisure sufficient to absorb the results of this activity, using it to enrich art and manners and personality. The Athenians were quite right in believing that the final goods of life could not be achieved by anyone who was forced to spend the entire day in some spiritually deadening or physically exhausting task in the shop or on the farm; but it is equally true that the spiritual life itself suffers by complete divorce from the vivid experiences and the salutary restraints of practical activity, and though the Athenians in some measure retained their hold on the fundamental manual and operative realities by participating in sport and war, it is perhaps no accident that their most original mind was a stone-cutter by trade, and the son of a midwife. A society that gives to one class all the opportunities of leisure, and to another all the burdens of work, dooms both classes to a partial spiritual sterility: for one of the main tasks of

life is to keep the inner world and the outer, the spiritual and the practical, in constant and rhythmically related activity.

The practical moral to be drawn from this is that servile labor—even if it produces necessities—should be minimized to the utmost, and that leisure must be distributed more universally in the form of a shorter working day, instead of being permitted to exist as the penalizing burden of “unemployment.” Without leisure, there can be neither art nor science nor fine conversation, nor any ceremonious performance of the offices of love and friendship. If our Machine Age has any promise for culture, it is not in the actual multiplication of motor cars and vacuum cleaners, but in the potential creation of leisure. But so long as “comfort” and not life is our standard, the Machine Age will remain impotent.

Our higher activities are curbed in society by the present alterations of excessive toil and short periods of sodden release. The fact that the majority of people go to the theater or the concert hall, for example, at the end of a long working day explains in good part the quality of the drama they demand. In a state of physical fatigue, they are unable to face the intense experiences that the great composers and dramatists call forth; they are jaded, and they need stimuli, or they are irritated, and they need sedatives. Except for an occasional musical festival for the leisured, like those at Salzburg or Glastonbury or Bethlehem, there has been little opportunity in our civilization to experience art under conditions which permit sensitive enjoyment, to say nothing of complete rapture. In this respect the traditional religions with their days of rest devoted to contemplation, and their seasonal festivals, were far more favorable to the finer culture of the mind. The effect of leisure in our machine-ridden society is merely to promote other forms of purely consumptive activity; such as the ritualistic vacuity of motoring, or equally banal forms of sport and show.

What applies to the contemplative arts applies equally to the arts of action: the dance, gymnastics, above all, perhaps, to sexual intercourse. Without leisure, freshness, energy, they lose their inner impetus, and must be excited to activity by the rivalry of athletic matches, by the negative stimulus of ill-health, or by preliminary bouts of strong liquor. Yet all these arts are quite as central to life as the most beneficent instrumental activity. In so far as many primitive communities have maintained the arts of action in a more consistent and whole-hearted way than our Western civilization, we need not boast too loudly about our advantages; for our progress has not been unmingled with lapses and regressions in matters that are much more important to our welfare than the production of cheap pig iron.

Instead of the one-sided practical activity fostered by the ideals of the utilitarians, and abetted by our modern technology, with its intense specialization, I believe in a rounded, symmetrical development of both the human personality and the community itself. Economics would play a part in that

development, but it would not dominate it. That specialization leads inevitably to efficiency in a specious argument; for as there is, in Ruskin's words, no wealth but life, so there is no efficiency except that which furthers life. Moreover, this argument takes no account of the mountains of useless arid work that are accumulated under our present habit of specialization; and it gives to this practice the sole credit for gains that are due to quite another technique, namely, coöperative intercourse and association.

The metaphysical case against specialization is even more overwhelming. We live in a world where no single event exists by itself; but, on the contrary, where every event is originally conditioned by its environment. If one attempts to deal with any little segment in isolation, one is dealing with a temporary abstraction. One begins, indeed, to learn a little about the things that are closest to one's interest only when one has traced out their interrelationships with that which may, apparently, lie far beyond. While abstract, analytical thinking is one of the great achievements of the race, it is misleading and mischievous unless it takes place in a synthetic environment. The habit of substituting abstractions for the situation as a whole is responsible, for example, for our habit of placing economic needs ahead of esthetic and spiritual ones, whereas it should be plain that they are indissolubly connected from the first moment of infancy when the baby taking milk at the breast responds equally to the esthetic stimulus of the lullaby; and it is only by a systematic and brutal miseducation that these interrelated needs can be sundered. That we have actually achieved this divorce during the last century is only a proof of the overwhelming power of the educational process when it is reinforced by the customs and preoccupations of society at large.

How are we to achieve synthesis in thought and synergy in action? Shall we heap together in a vast mechanical accumulation all our specialist researches, in the fashion of an encyclopedia? Shall we boil down all knowledge and practice into popular outlines? No. The result of such an arithmetical addition would merely be another specialism. While a schematic synthesis is a necessary help to orderly thinking, the place to achieve synthesis primarily is in living itself, in encompassing all the activities that make a full life. This does not mean that we are to disperse ourselves, like the proverbial rolling stone, in a series of inconsecutive and nonrelated occupations: it means, rather, that once we have found a central purpose and point of view in our own life, we should subject ourselves to every activity that is necessary for a full experience and a complete understanding of life—knowing at first hand both manual toil and esthetic ecstasy, periods of hard routine and periods of adventure, intellectual concentration and the animal relaxation, strict discipline and random activity. We must explore our environment in space and time, and selectively reconstitute its chaotic elements in a related pattern—taking possession of the historic heritage of culture by reëducation, and reacting upon the cities and landscapes and industries we have surveyed by replanning them for actual functions and humane ends. Both reëducation

and replanning begin at home. A social program that lacks a form of individual discipline is a hollow shell. This form of discovery is ultimately self-discovery; and through coöperative action, it becomes self-fulfillment.

Such a complete mode of living must inevitably carry over into each special situation; only a vicious system of miseducation can prevent it. By ceasing to live in isolated compartments, one avoids the delusive habit of treating the world in this manner, and one approaches each event with an intuition of its wholeness—as not primarily physical or biological or economic or esthetic, but as all of these things together in a certain unique, emergent combination. Temporarily, as a practical convenience, one will not be afraid of using the method of analysis to the utmost; but, weighing, measuring, decomposing, one will still be aware of the organic whole in space and time with which one started, and to which, enriched by the process of analysis and specialized activity, one must ultimately return.

In so far as we fall short of completeness and symmetry in our daily life, we must be doubly aware of the unconscious distortions and falsifications that follow from such a condition. The conceptions of purity and chastity and biological fulfillment, formed by abstemious saints driven grudgingly to admit that it is better to marry than to burn, have very little relevance or efficacy in guiding the rest of the race in the joys and duties of family life; and in general, the intensification of the spiritual life which follows from complete abstention from the normal routine of the mass of mankind, has frequently erected for society goals and duties that arise properly only from such spiritual concentration—and without it work mischief. The peace achievable in solitude gives small clue to the proper guidance of the ego in social situations of strife and rivalry. A living philosophy must face life and society in their complex wholeness; it must avoid those deceptive simplifications which derive from the conscious or unconscious renunciation of the whole.

My faith, for its full consummation, must be embodied in a community; for a well-integrated life is impossible unless the social relations that condition and develop it respond to its needs. How shall I describe such a community? This life does not exist in the past, although every civilization in its best moments gives more than a hint of it, and plenty of guarantee against its being fantastic and beyond reach. Symbolically, this rounded and inter-related life has been expressed in certain works of art, such as *Moby Dick*, *War and Peace*, *The Magic Mountain*; and if one were founding a church, instead of summoning up one's intuition of life, one would include in the calendar of saints a Plato, a Blake, a Goethe, a Whitman. Though among men of science this faith has cohered more slowly, partly because the pattern of research has been set by a purely analytical seventeenth century physics, it gets its rational support from science to-day, and would include men like



A. N. Whitehead, J. S. Haldane, J. A. Thomson, L. J. Henderson, Jennings, and Wheeler.

For me, the confirmation of my intuitions came through acquaintance with Patrick Geddes, whose long life spans the service of many sciences, from biology to sociology, and many types of activity, from that of the speculative philosopher to the planner of cities. Geddes showed that a conception of life, unified at the center and ramifying in many interrelations and comprehensions at the periphery, could be rationally lived; that it had not been outmoded by the age of specialization but was actually a mode that might, through its superior vitality and efficiency, supplant this age; that one could practice in one's own person in the germ a type of thinking and feeling and acting which might ultimately be embodied, with fuller, deeper effect, in the whole community; that even on the crude test of survival, a life that was organically grounded and pursued with a little courage and audacity, had perhaps a better chance than the narrow goals and diminished possibilities of our dominant civilization. My utopia is such a life, writ large.

To be alive, to act, to contemplate, to embody significance and value, to become fully human—these ends are difficult of achievement; and they are all the more so at a time like the present when the whole weight of our civilization is thrown in the opposite direction and, as Spengler has profoundly demonstrated, tends towards forms of sterility and death. But these goals are none the worse for being difficult; and even if the battle were doomed to be lost, one would remember that the path of salvation lies not in the victory, but as Krishna tells Arjuna, in the acceptance of battle. "Not tame and gentle bliss, but disaster, heroically encountered, is man's true happy ending"; and in this spirit one can face with equanimity both life itself and its tragic and ambiguous rewards.

## WHAT TIME THE GOOD LIFE?

Jacques Barzun (1945)

### I

IN THE recent and deservedly successful collection of F. Scott Fitzgerald's literary remains, *The Crack-Up*, the novelist harks back to an experience of his youth in order to characterize his lifelong dissatisfaction with himself, as well as to exemplify one of the causes of his crack-up in mid-career. The youthful experience involved two opportunities missed by ill luck: the first, to play in a Princeton football game when he was a member of the squad; the other, to serve overseas in 1918 after a year of officer training.

In the same volume with this confession, another novelist, Glenway Wescott, finds these two incidents too trivial for Fitzgerald's regret or, as he says, too *alumnal* in feeling. He blames not only Fitzgerald's but our national

immaturity. Wit and plausibility carry the point, and in the midst of Wescott's splendid funeral oration on his fellow artist, no one thinks of stopping to argue.

Yet with the true poet's gift of seeing likenesses, Wescott, as he goes on, casually compares America's sentimental hankering after collegiate glory with old Europe's passion for military life. At this point in my reading, I felt as if suddenly brought up short and confronted with a huge, intricate, overhanging question, whose roots, deep in our emotions and our culture, move us to uneasiness. Why was it that in looking into himself *after* recovering from his breakdown, Fitzgerald recalled these two from the many disappointments in his past? Why was it that the expression of this nostalgia made Wescott think of bloody trophies and old armor? And why is it that so many men—especially older men—are now coming back from this war with a longing for a new life, at once active and altruistic—in short, heroic?

One middle-aged naval officer whom I recently spoke with—he called as a stranger who had read some words of mine—said: "I feel restless and I need an unbiased opinion which I cannot get from my family and friends. Now that the war is over, shall I be doing all I can for the republic as a naval bureaucrat? The next twenty years are all-important to me. I want to make something of them—of myself. At sixty my turn will be gone. Should I go back home, in the South, and enter politics? Should I teach? Should I try to write? Lord knows there are millions of things needing to be done. But where to begin? What to fight? How far to compromise oneself for the sake of the good? And what *is* the good?"

As for the young whom I encounter daily, with a rather fuller knowledge of their abilities, they ask essentially the same question, worded in a hundred different ways. They feel as Fitzgerald did thirty years ago, and are afraid they may look back later, as he did, on lost opportunities.

The reason for this apprehension, this restlessness, is the same throughout: the perennial desire to put life to disinterested uses. For to most men, sooner or later in their development or in that of their social group, disinterested action comes to signify the good life. They first catch a glimpse of it at school, perhaps, or in reading, or possibly during an illness, frequently during the boredom and the dangers of war. The germ, once caught, cannot be expelled from the moral system, and the victim has no peace until, like Faust at the end of his life, he perceives his own utility to others than himself.

The schoolboy's conception of the good life, to be sure, makes us smile, because we think—or profess to think—that one touchdown more or less for Princeton is of small moment. But to say that is to miss the point. What made Fitzgerald unhappy was that at a given juncture he had failed to realize himself through an act of power, and one which was to serve wider ends than his own. It was the pattern, not the instance, that mattered. And the sense of power here is as important as the sense of unselfishness: the disinterested life must in itself be interesting. Hence the virtue, however limited, of the col-

legiate ideal. So long as football teams exist and are rewarded with applause, the wearing of shoulder pads and the risk of concussion must seem to the nascent spiritual sense both socially good and individually satisfying.

Meeting this double test is what made valid the European ideal of military glory that Glenway Westcott deprecates. It also explains the paradoxical praise, throughout history, of actions usually held base—such as theft and murder—when they are transmuted by the conditions of war into self-sacrifice and heroism. It is not merely that defending the city or nation is useful, for baking bread and slaughtering cattle also help preserve the lives of one's fellow citizens. No, the case for war, blind as it is to other consequences, is that it provides opportunity for individual feats that tax the energies of man as well as earn the approval of his peers. This mixture of qualities boils down to two—a meaningful risk freely incurred and scorn for gain. So true is this that in modern times we have made a hero of the physician who goes on his rounds regardless of plague, and of the research scientist who tries out his new-found bacillus on his own blood stream.

It sometimes seems as if nothing short of this—a whole life risked for another life gained—will satisfy the highest instinct for self-fulfillment. William James recognized the strength of this desire when he discussed the need for a "moral equivalent of war," both as a substitute for international bloodshed and as an outlet for irrepressible energies. But fortunately the passion to exercise latent powers, to win against odds or perish in the attempt, is not always awake and raging; nor is it distributed evenly among all men, or else we should all be at one another's throats courting notable extinction for the good of the whole. Still, whatever the psychoanalyst may say about the death wish or atonement for guilt, the fact remains that the impulse survives all explanations. At its mildest we get Bernard Shaw's express determination to be "used up and thrown on the scrapheap" when his work is done.

In the aftermath of war, in an age seeking organization, an age, moreover, when the many have been aroused to a sense of their individual dignity, only to be cast down in one way or another into all manner of indignities, we cannot afford to ignore this particular force of nature, nor to pooh-pooh its varied manifestations. Rather, we must take stock of the ways in which we personally and socially deal with it.

## II

Clearly enough, war itself has lost most of its attractions for modern man. Not only is fighting harder and harder to relate to worthy purposes, but as an activity it has lost its charm in losing its versatility. When a late medieval chronicler like Froissart said that "to rob and pill" was a good life, he was thinking of the resourcefulness and daring brought out by the barons' wars. But this handicraft, so to speak, has become industrialized like everything

else and the consequent division of labor has made soldiering more and more of a mechanic's job.

This is not to say that courage and intelligence may not continue to decide battles, but that the form they take—quite apart from moral considerations—lacks the qualities that once inspired the hero and the poet. The very instruments of war are industrial machines, wielded at a distance against anonymous "targets," which are increasingly likely to be civilian masses or industrial plants themselves. Incredibly enough, the thrill has gone out of war, either through being magnified into psychic disturbance or through being diffused into a vast anonymous chaos, which leaves only the age-old horror, no longer masked.

This result is hopeful if it means a wide recognition that war is at best a poor last resort which convicts all parties to it of gross negligence and stupidity. But if William James was right forty years ago about the psychological inadequacy of the works of peace, the automatic self-debunking of war must create a still greater void in the souls of men. For the same forces which have vaporized the pleasure and the glory of war have destroyed the pleasure and the glory of peaceful tasks. It does look as if the last refuge of the good life, disinterested and interesting, were the college football field.

Consider the alternatives. The largest part of every modern population is made up of workers in and around industry. The futility of routine paper work everyone knows, and it has passed into a cliché of the language that the white-collar worker is sometimes less than a man. In industry itself, there is indeed man-sized exertion and risk, but each man labors under economic compulsion, for gain only, and at routines that involve no individual conquest of brain-and-brawn over matter. Whoever first went down into a mine to bring back coal was a hero, but 200,000 standardized coal miners no more constitute a company of heroes than the furnaceman deserves the title of Prometheus. And this is so despite the daily risks run and the indispensable services performed. What is missing is the pioneering spirit, the freedom of choice, the chance to fulfill capacities to the utmost. We may want all of the miners' time or all of their strength, but we only want the smallest part of their minds and hearts.

All of which can be summed up by saying that ostensibly we live to consume and are forced to produce for others' consumption, and so on in an endless round. Our ideals are ideals of sustenance.

They may represent an advance over ideals of destruction; I do not doubt it for an instant, but even for the underfed, the exploited, and the overworked, they are not enough. In moments of reflection we may speak glowingly of technology "giving the people leisure." And after that? We are vaguely thinking of hobbies and recreation. We hardly seem to know that the duty of a civilization is to make life both real and important, which means that work itself must be such. Rest and play remain the side dishes of existence.

Contrast in imagination the possible condition of Utopian coal miners working foolproof machines only four hours a day with, let us say, an Order of Excavating Knights, or Pilgrims of the Mine, living frugally out of the world, dressed in a distinctive garb and singing bituminous hymns. Why would the same physical occupation wear in the two cases entirely different aspects, of which only the second could lay claim to any aesthetic, that is to say, self-justifying quality?

I need not answer the question, nor am I suggesting this kind of purely external transformation as a panacea. I am only using familiar symbols, both historic and modern, to show the potency of cultural forms and to exemplify a plight common to us all.

We must indeed all be aware of it, or there would not be so many efforts to dignify the trades and professions. The businessman, with his slogans of service and his convention speeches intimating that he dies hourly so that the world may live, deceives only himself, if so much. The merchant has always been at a disadvantage in the search for the good life because his object is so unmistakably and inescapably gain. And in America, the land of combined dreams and opportunities, the dissatisfaction led to the practice of early retirement from business, in hopes of "really living" one's old age. But to see the fallacy of this solution one has only to read those stories of Henry James where middle-aged American magnates drag themselves wearily through European resorts. For the stay-at-homes there was only philanthropy, which turned into a business, or collecting objets d'art, which was expensive frivolity.

Only a few had their temporary innings as great entrepreneurs who opened up the wilderness, built railroads or "civilized" the distant jungle or veldt. Looking back, it is easy to see that in Imperialism, side by side with crass motive, lived a boyish ideal, typified by Cecil Rhodes and made into literature by Rudyard Kipling. But even if we did not know, as we do, that this form of self-expression was as destructive as war, the opportunities for it are over. There is no longer a new world, no western frontier to develop, no remote backward lands, no margin for expansion or waste. We are packed in tight like sardines, and feel equally beheaded, equally anonymous and powerless.

Perhaps we ought not to feel that way, perhaps we should be as contented and as mute as the sardine; but whatever our duty in the matter, the dissatisfaction is there, the restlessness, and therefore the social danger. If Scott Fitzgerald draws our attention to it for the writer and the artist, the veterans young and old remind us that the problem exists for the talented citizen with a sense of responsibility. And with our commitment to a democratic equality in education, in social life, and in standards of living, it is only a question of time until the hitherto inarticulate masses voice comparable demands.

Obviously, though these stirrings occur in many a heart, they remain dispersed, futile, possibly corruptive, until somehow channeled and institu-

tionalized. At college—to revert to our starting point—the budding hero goes out for the team. The initial step is provided for; talent and good luck decide the rest.

The world can never be quite so simple, but it can also establish channels for ability and self-fulfillment by that intangible thing we call tradition. The aristocratic tradition, as we all know, regarded the church, the army, and politics as proper occupations. In all three the ideal was disinterested service. It was, of course, imperfectly realized, not only because men are imperfect, but because of the arbitrary limits imposed on talents by the dominance of a small class owning the land. Hence the ultimate explosion of new talents, new wealth, new peoples, which together established the middle-class tradition. Based on trade and manufacture, and expressed in Napoleon's slogan of "careers open to talent," it was long the chief American ideal. It produced the diabolical competition of the nineteenth century, and also that century's recognition of greatness, of which it had a remarkable abundance in all fields.

Now with the extension of democracy—the vote, popular education, and industrial manners—we must revise or restate our traditional purposes. So far we have failed to make even a beginning. We have merely taken a negative position against the two previous ideals. Democracy, we think, means "no greatness needed." We have borrowed from industry the notion of interchangeable parts. With our increasing repugnance to war we have foolishly repudiated the hero; and in pursuing ideals of production for consumption, we have thrown creative intelligence into the meat-grinder.

Fitzgerald's career remains a symbol of our heedlessness, though it may be that his "rediscovery" today, and even the overpraise he has lately received in some quarters, show a dim and abashed recognition of our collective mistake. In the midst of our fear of undirected effort, we wish we could somehow make good to him our mishandling of his abilities, and we quite properly regret for ourselves that he did not give us more—more things on the scale and of the solidity of the *The Great Gatsby*. We took his treasure in small change and we are the losers.

### III

How did it come about? This "lag," this "divorce" between the artist and society, is not an inevitable thing, nor is it so much a novel separation as an aspect of the general reduction of individual power through the mechanizing of communication and the assembly-line treatment of ideas. Theoretically these facilities should multiply the gifted individual's power; actually they divide it, and the modern poet envies Homer, who, with only a dozen Greek revelers at his feet, could probably influence the minds of six. The movies and the radio reach millions, but since no powerful mind and no stirring idea can get through them, they are barriers to intelligence, mountains breeding endless generations of mice instead of men.

Everything conspires to the same end. An early and legitimate literary success, like Fitzgerald's, brings the writer within reach of his people, only to have him snatched away and mangled by the machine. Everyone acclaims his "promise" and rushes to discount the note at the lowest interest rate while putting upon him a thousand bewildering pressures and temptations—to take the cash, to water his stock, to repeat or alienate himself. No wonder that the man has to break down, to cease to exist, before he can recapture control of his own powers. The amazing thing about Fitzgerald is not the crack-up, which he analyzed so accurately, but the comeback.

The misfortune for the nation at large is that the death of the hero occurred in mid-career. It is of course easy to say that Fitzgerald was weak where he should have been strong; that an artist should invariably resist the pull of money, friendship, and false praise; that others could and did resist. But we must remember the terms of the case: the man who holds aloof forfeits our attention; him also we heed only when he is dead. What we are asking for is an impossible hairline adjustment between yielding and holding back—a kind of artistic coquetting, as wasteful of the artist's intellect as it would be repellent to his moral sense. He has enough to do nurturing his abilities, and if drawn one way by them, the opposite way by his public, publishers, and promoters, he must be made of oak not to crack. For the pressures keep piling up; everyone lends a hand, like children who swing from a bough until it splits, and hide their discomfiture by saying, "We knew it would break if we kept at it long enough."

Meanwhile the branch is no longer part of the tree. The writer who breaks down like Fitzgerald—or who yields wholly like Booth Tarkington—is bound to feel at best balked, baffled, and unused; at worst resentful, morbid, and cynical. We think of the last years of Herman Melville's life and shudder, comforted only by the thought that there is at least a kind of protection in not being readily marketable, consumable—and forgettable.

Why, it may be asked, so much concern about a writer or two? Do we not catch up with our past after all, and lose nothing in the long run? The answer to this plausible question is tied up with that other, more massive difficulty presented by the talented, responsible citizens of whom my naval officer was a fair sample. The difficulty is to tell them what to do with their abilities; how to serve the republic, both alone and in groups; where to seek the makings of the good life. All would agree that the collegiate ideal, the placing of the golden age before adult life begins, is an admission of failure, a make-believe. The warrior was better off, for he could look forward to at least one action after winning his spurs. There can be no argument: the good life, to be pursued, must lie ahead, not behind man at his maturity.

Now in the nature of things, neither the college boy hugging a pigskin, nor the confessedly bewildered citizen looking for a task, can be called upon to conceive fresh ideals or start new traditions. It would be like telling a man under a steam roller that he must help himself. The creation of new cultural

forms is a specialty, the specialty of the seer and the artist. It is the poets, from Homer to the troubadours, who created the aristocratic ideal; it is another group of poets, aided by philosophers and sociologists, who created the middle-class ideal. The very notion of science as a career and technology as a noble art came from the minds of writers who were neither scientists nor technologists, but who sought and found satisfaction in shaping future life to the pattern of their imagination.

It goes without saying that these ideals and traditions are not invented out of the blue, in disregard of actualities. The successful ones are obviously practical in the fullest sense, since they lead men to act, and give a meaning to life which men are unhappy without. But neither are these ideals mere abstract statements like "the love of humanity" or "democratic good will." They must, on the contrary, be recognizable images of a life possible *now*, artistic renderings of actions that seem as yet half conventional, half quixotic. For the setting up of such images we need artists, by which I mean writers, painters, musicians, philosophers, orators, and statesmen—*makers*, as the term "poet" originally signified.

A democracy, just because it permits cultural diversity, needs more of them than most societies so as to concentrate the scattered wills of the multitude. Hence we must cherish our Fitzgeralds, not consume them; make heroes of them while they are still alive, not weep crocodile tears over their graves; remembering always the meaning we must attach to hero-worship if it is to remain compatible with self-fulfillment: love with a willingness to follow.

### LINCOLN AT 37

(From The Prairie Years)

Carl Sandburg (1926)

THE thirty-seven-year-old son of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln had changed with a changing western world. His feet had worn deerskin moccasins as a boy; they were put into rawhide boots when he was full-grown; now he had them in dressed calf leather. His head-cover was a coon-skin cap when he was a boy, and all men and boys wore the raccoon tail as a high headpiece; floating down the Mississippi to New Orleans he wore a black felt hat from an eastern factory and it held the post-office mail of New Salem; now he was a prominent politician and lawyer wearing a tall, stiff, silk hat known as a "stovepipe," also called a "plug hat."

In this "stovepipe" hat he carried letters, newspaper clippings, deeds, mortgages, checks, receipts. Once he apologized to a client for not replying to a letter; he had bought a new hat and in cleaning out the old hat he missed this particular letter. The silk stovepipe hat was nearly a foot high, with a brim only an inch or so in width; it was a high, lean, longish hat and it made Lincoln look higher, leaner, more longish.



As he had gone along farther in law practice and politics, he had taken more care of his looks. His first partner, John T. Stuart, was one of the handsomest figures and best-dressed men in Springfield; and Lincoln had to take Stuart's place once in a courthouse near Springfield, handling a case for a client; when Lincoln introduced himself as the man sent by Stuart to take Stuart's place, the client, an Englishman accustomed to wigs and gowns in a courtroom, refused to take Lincoln as his lawyer, snorted with disgust, and hired another lawyer.

And though Lincoln had begun wearing broadcloth and white shirts with a white collar and black silk cravat, and suggestion of sideburns coming down three-fourths the length of his ears, he was still known as one of the carelessly dressed men of Springfield, along with Stephen Logan, who wore unbleached cotton shirts and had sat two years as a circuit-court judge wearing an unbleached cotton shirt with no cravat or stock.

The loose bones of Lincoln were hard to fit with neat clothes; and, once on, they were hard to keep neat; trousers go baggy at the knees of a storyteller who has the habit, at the end of a story, where the main laugh comes in, of putting his arms around his knees, raising his knees to his chin, and rocking to and fro. Those who spoke of his looks often mentioned his trousers creeping to the ankles and higher, his rumpled hair, his wrinkled vest. When he wasn't away making speeches, electioneering or practicing law on the circuit, he cut kindling wood, tended to the cordwood for the stoves in the house, milked the cow, gave her a few forks of hay and changed her straw bedding every day.

He analyzed the tariff, the national banks, the public lands, and the annexation of Texas, while pailing a cow. One evening he went to where his cow was pastured with other cows, and as he told it: "I found the calves all together and away from the cows, and I didn't know my calf well enough to distinguish her from the others. Still, I picked out one that I thought was mine. Presently that identical calf went and sucked my cow and then I knew it was mine."

He looked like a farmer, it was often said; he seemed to have come from prairies and barns rather than city streets and barber shops; and in his own way he admitted and acknowledged it; he told voters from the stump that it was only a few years since he had worn buckskin breeches and they shrank in the rain and crept to his knees, leaving the skin blue and bare. The very words that came off his lips in tangled important discussions among lawyers had a wilderness air and a log-cabin smack. The way he pronounced the word "idea" was more like "idee," the word "really" more like a drawled Kentucky "ra-a-ly."

As he strode or shambled into a gathering of men, he stood out as a special figure for men to look at; it was a little as though he had come farther on harder roads and therefore had longer legs for the traveling; and a little as though he had been where life is stripped to its naked facts and it would be useless for him to try to put on certain pretenses of civilization.

He may have figured out for himself about how far he could go and find it easy and healthy and comfortable for him to be in speech and looks the Indiana cornhusker and the Mississippi River flatboatman. The manners of a gentleman and a scholar dropped off him sometimes like a cloak, and his speech was that of a farmer who works his own farm, or a lawyer who pails a cow morning and evening and might refer to it incidentally in polite company or in a public address. He was not embarrassed, and nobody else was embarrassed, when at the Bowling Green funeral he had stood up and, instead of delivering a formal funeral address on the character of the deceased, had shaken with grief and put a handkerchief to his face and wept tears, and motioned to the body-bearers to take his dead friend away. There was a natural grace to it; funerals should be so conducted; a man who loves a dead man should stand up and try to speak and find himself overwhelmed with grief so that instead of speaking he smothers his face in a handkerchief and weeps. This was the eloquence of naked fact beyond which there is no eloquence.

At the death of a great friend he could weep without shame, lone and inevitable; at a petty campaign lie alluding to his aristocratic relatives visiting him, he could laugh and say that only one had made a visit and he was arrested for stealing a jew's-harp. He could be immensely solemn, tenderly grave, quizzically humorous, and flatly comic. As he strode or shambled into a gathering of men, he stood out as a special figure to look at; some of the range of his feeling, the gamut of the solemn and comic, was registered in the angles of his body, in the sweeping lengths of extra long arms and legs, in the panther slouch of running and throwing muscles, in the wiry, rawbone frame that seemed to have been at home once handling an ax in tall timber, with the silent silhouette of an eagle watching.

Standing, Lincoln loomed tall with his six feet, four inches of height; sitting in a chair he looked no taller than other men, except that his knees rose higher than the level of the seat of the chair. Seated on a low chair or bench he seemed to be crouching. The shoulders were stooped and rounded, the head bent forward and turned downward; shirt collars were a loose fit; an Adam's apple stood out on a scrawny neck; his voice was a tenor that carried song tunes poorly but had clear and appealing modulations in his speeches; in rare moments of excitement it rose to a startling and unforgettable falsetto tone that carried every syllable with unmistakable meaning. In the stoop of his shoulders and the forward bent of his head there was a grace and familiarity so that it was easy for shorter people to look up into his face and talk with him.

The mouth and eyes, and the facial muscles running back from the mouth and eyes, masked a thousand shades of meaning. In hours of melancholy, when poisons of dejection drugged him, the underlip and its muscles dropped; his friends felt either that he then was a sick man with a disorder of bile and secretions or else that his thoughts roamed in farther and darker caverns

than ordinary men ventured into. Ordinarily there was a fresh, gracious calm; it was a grave, sad calm, perhaps gloomy, but strong with foundations resting on substrata of granite; a mouth shaped with depths of hope that its fixed resolves would be kept and held. And between this solemn mouth of Lincoln and at the other end of the gamut, his comic mouth, there was the play of a thousand shades of meaning. Besides being tragedian, he was comedian. Across the mask of his dark gravity could come a light-ray of the quizzical, the puzzled. This could spread into the beginning of a smile and then spread farther into wrinkles and wreaths of laughter that lit the whole face into a glow; and it was of the quality of his highest laughter that it traveled through his whole frame, currents of it vitalizing his toes.

A fine chiseling of lines on the upper lip seemed to be some continuation of the bridge of the nose, forming a feature that ended in a dimple at the point of the chin. The nose was large; if it had been a trifle larger he would have been called big-nosed; it was a nose for breathing deep sustained breaths of air, a strong shapely nose, granitic with resolve and patience. Two deepening wrinkles started from the sides of the right and left nostrils and ran down the outer rims of the upper lip; farther out on the two cheeks were deepening wrinkles that had been long crude dimples when he was a boy; hours of toil, pain, and laughter were deepening these wrinkles. From the sides of the nose, angular cheek-bones branched right and left toward the large ears, forming a base for magnificently constructed eye-sockets. Bushy black eyebrows shaded the sockets where the eyeballs rested with gray transformers of action, thought, laughter. Shaded into the gray of his eyes was a tinting of hazel. In his eyes as nowhere else was registered the shifting light of his moods; their language ran from rapid twinkles of darting hazel that won the hearts of children on to a fixed baffling gray that the shrewdest lawyers and politicians could not read, to find there an intention he wanted to hide.

The thatch of coarse hair on the head was black when seen from a distance, but close up it had a brownish, rough, sandy tint. He had been known to comb it, parting it far on the right side, and slicking it down so that it looked groomed by a somewhat particular man; but most of the time it was loose and rumpled. The comb might have parted it either on the far right or on the far left side; he wasn't particular.

Throughout his life as a grown man he was holding to the hacked-out slants of body that his father had in mind in the younger days when his frame stretched upward in a rapid, uneven growth, and his father said he looked like he needed a carpenter's plane put to him. In those days they had called him "Long Shanks"; and as a grown man his long shanks were a dominant feature of his physical presence. Yet it was true that men and women as varied as Stephen T. Logan and Hannah Armstrong felt about him something elusive, glancing, elfin, off and beyond all that was told by the gaunt, rambling lines of his physical structure. The eyes, the laughter, the play of words, a scrutinizing, drawling poise, curves that came and went with the tricks of

lawns, stables, greenhouses and glass grape-arbor, the tame deer among the trees. All that remains to me of my grandfather is his majestic height, his long slim fingers and the polished courtesy of his manners. He had come around the Horn in a sailing ship when the West Coast was the wild frontier, made his pile and lived with Russian lavishness. Portland was less than thirty years old, a little town carved out of the Oregon forests, with streets deep in mud and the wilderness coming down close around it. Through this my grandfather drove his blooded horses to his smart carriages, imported from the East—and from Europe—with liveried coachmen and footmen on the box. The lawn terrace below the house was surrounded on three sides by great fir trees, up whose sides ran gas-pipes grown over with bark; on summer evenings canvas was laid on the turf, and people danced, illuminated by flaming jets of gas which seemed to spout from the trees. There was something fantastic in all that.

Then we were poor, living in a little house down in the town, with a crowd of gay young people around my gay young father and mother. My head was full of fairy stories and tales of giants, witches and dragons, and I invented a monster called Hormuz, who lived in the woods behind the town and devoured little children—with which I terrified the small boys and girls of the neighborhood and incidentally myself. Almost all the servants in those days were Chinese, who stayed for years, at last getting to be almost members of the family. They brought ghosts and superstitions into the house, and the tang of bloody feuds among themselves, idols and foods and drinks, strange customs and ceremonies; half-affectionate, half-contemptuous, wholly independent, and withal outlandish, they have left me a memory of pigtailed gongs and fluttering red paper. And there was my uncle, a romantic figure who played at coffee planting in Central America, mixed in revolutions, and sometimes blew in, tanned and bearded and speaking “spigotty” like a *mestizo*. Once the tale ran that he had helped to lead a revolution that captured Guatemala for a few brief days, and was made Secretary of State; the first thing he did was to appropriate the funds of the National Treasury to give a grand state ball, and then he declared war on the German Empire—because he had flunked his German course in college. Later he went out to the Philippines as a volunteer in the Spanish War—and the tale of how he was made King of Guam is still told with shouts of mirth by the veterans of the Second Oregon.

My mother, who has always encouraged me in the things I wanted to do, taught me to read. I don't know when that was, but I remember the orgy of books I plunged into. History was my passion, kings strutting about and the armored ranks of men-at-arms clashing forward in closed ranks against a hail of cloth-yard shafts; but I was equally enamored of Mark Twain, and Bill Nye, and Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, and Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, and *The Arabian Nights*, and the *Tales of the Round Table*. What I didn't understand, my imagination interpreted. At the age of nine I began to write

a Comic History of the United States—after Bill Nye—and I think it was then I made up my mind to be a writer.

About that time we moved to an apartment hotel, and I went to school. Those first few years of school stimulated my ambition to learn; but since then the curricula of schools and colleges have meant little to me. I've always been an indifferent student, to say the least, except when some subject like elementary chemistry, or English poetry, or composition caught my imagination—or the personality of some great teacher, like Professor Copeland of Harvard. Why should I have been interested in the stupid education of our time? We take young soaring imaginations, consumed with curiosity about the life they see all around, and feed them with dead technique: the flawless purity of Washington, Lincoln's humdrum chivalry, our dull and virtuous history and England's honest glory; Addison's graceful style as an essayist, Goldsmith celebrating the rural clergy of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson at his most vapid, and George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, Macaulay, and the sonorous orations of Edmund Burke; and in Latin Caesar's Gallic guide-book; and Cicero's mouthings about Roman politics. And the teachers! Men and women—usually women—whose chief qualification is that they can plough steadily through a dull round of dates, acts, half-truths and rules for style, without questioning, without interpreting and without seeing how ridiculously unlike the world their teachings are. I have forgotten most of it, forced on me before I was ready; what I do know came mostly from books I had the curiosity to read outside school hours. And many fine things I have had to force myself to explore again, because school once spoiled them for me.

But in going to school I first entered the world of my fellows, and the social experience meant more and more to me until it almost crowded out the study side altogether. I can still see the school playground full of running and shouting and clamoring boys, and feel as I felt then when they stopped here and there to look at me, a new boy, with curious and insolent eyes. I was small though, and not very well, and at the beginning I didn't mix much with them. . . . But after school was out there were great doings, which were too exciting to keep out of. The town was divided into districts, ruled over by gangs of boys in a constant state of fierce warfare. I belonged to the Fourteenth Street gang, whose chief was a tall, curly-headed Irish boy who lived across the street—he is now a policeman. My best friend could make sounds like a bugle, and he was trumpeter. Standing in the middle of the street he would blow, and in a minute boys would come swarming to him, tearing up lawns and making mud-balls as they came. Then we'd go running and shouting up the hill to give battle to the Montgomery Street gang, or beat off their attack. . . . And there were the wooded hills behind the town, where Indians and bears and outlaws might be lurking to be trailed by our scouts and Robin Hoods.

Both my mother's parents and my father came from upper New York

State, and when I was ten years old my mother and my brother and I went East to visit them. We spent a summer month at Plymouth, Massachusetts, visited New York (I still remember the awful summer heat, the vermin in our boarding house and the steam engines on the Elevated), and were in Washington when the "Maine" blew up and the first volunteers left for the Spanish War.

Then I was back in Portland, in a new house, settling into the life of school and play. We had a theatre in our attic, where we acted our own plays, and we built scenic railways in the yard, and log cabins in the woods back of town. I had a number of highly colored schemes for getting adventure and wealth at the same time. For instance, I once began to dig a tunnel from our house to school, about a mile away; we were going to steal two sheep and hide them in the tunnel, and these two sheep were going to have children, and so on, until a large flock had gathered—then we'd sell them. My brother and I had a pony, and we went on camping trips back in the woods, and sailing and swimming and camping up the Willamette River. I began to write poetry, too, and read voraciously everything I could get hold of, from Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* and Marie Corelli, to Scott and Stevenson and Sir Thomas Malory.

But with all this I wasn't entirely happy. I was often ill. Outside of a few friends, I wasn't a success with the boys. I hadn't strength or fight enough to be good at athletics—except swimming, which I have always loved; and I was a good deal of a physical coward. I would sneak out over the back fence to avoid boys who were "laying" for me, or who I thought were "laying" for me. Sometimes I fought, when I couldn't help myself, and sometimes even won; but I preferred to be called a coward than fight. I hated pain. My imagination conjured up horrible things that would happen to me, and I simply ran away. One time, when I was on the editorial board of the school paper, a boy I was afraid of warned me not to publish a joking paragraph I had written about him—and I didn't. . . . My way to school lay through a sort of slum district, called Goose Hollow, peopled with brutal Irish boys, many of whom grew up to be prizefighters and baseball stars. I was literally frightened out of my senses when I went through Goose Hollow. Once a Goose Hollowite made me promise to give him a nickel if he didn't hit me, and walked up to my house with me while I got it for him. . . . The strange thing was that when I was cornered, and fought, even a licking wasn't a hundredth as bad as I thought it would be; but I never learned anything from that—the next time I ran away just the same, and suffered the most ghastly pangs of fear.

I wasn't much good at the things other boys were, and their codes of honor and conduct didn't hold me. They felt it, too, and had a sort of good-natured contempt for me. I was neither one thing nor the other, neither altogether coward nor brave, neither manly nor sissified, neither ashamed nor unashamed. I think that is why my impression of my boyhood is an

unhappy one, and why I have so few close friends in Portland, and why I don't want ever again to live there.

It must have disappointed my father that I was like that, though he never said much about it. He was a great fighter, one of the first of the little band of political insurgents who were afterwards, as the Progressive party, to give expression to the new social conscience of the American middle class. His terrible slashing wit, his fine scorn of stupidity and cowardice and littleness, made him many enemies, who never dared attack him to his face, but fought him secretly, and were glad when he died. As United States Marshal under Roosevelt, it was he who, with Francis J. Heney and Lincoln Steffens, smashed the Oregon Land Fraud Ring, which was a brave thing to do in Oregon then. I remember him and Heney in the Marshal's office guying William J. Burns, the detective on the case, for his Hawkshaw make-up and his ridiculous melodramatics. In 1910 a man came around to browbeat my father into contributing to the Republican campaign fund, and he kicked the collector down the courthouse stairs—and was removed from the marshalship by President Taft. Afterward he ran for Congress, but lost out by a slim margin, mainly because he came East to see me graduated from college instead of stumping the state.

When I was sixteen I went East to a New Jersey boarding school, and then to Harvard College, and afterward to Europe for a year's travel, and my brother followed me through college. We never knew until later how much our mother and father denied themselves that we might go, and how he poured out his life that we might live like rich men's sons. He and mother always gave us more than we asked, in freedom and understanding as well as material things. And on the day my brother graduated from college, he broke under the terrible effort, and died a few weeks later. It has always seemed to me bitter irony that he couldn't have lived to see my little success. He was always more like a wise, kind friend than a father.

Boarding school, I think, meant more to me than anything in my boyhood. Among these strange boys I came as a stranger, and I soon found out that they were willing to accept me at my own value. I was in fine health. The ordered life of the community interested me; I was impressed by its traditional customs and dignities, school patriotism, and the sense of a long-settled and established civilization, so different from the raw, pretentious West. My stories and verses were published in the school paper; I played football, and ran the quarter-mile, with very good average success; I had a fight or two, and stuck it out. There were perilous adventures, too, when a few of us stole down the fire escapes at night and went to country dances, slipping back to bed in the dormitory at dawn. With the school social butterflies, I "fussed" girls in the town, and was not laughed at. Busy, happy, with lots of friends, I expanded into self-confidence. So without trying I found myself; and since then I have never been very much afraid of men.

## II

In 1906 I went up to Harvard almost alone, knowing hardly a soul in the University. My college class entered over seven hundred strong, and for the first three months it seemed to me, going around to lectures and meetings, as if every one of the seven hundred had friends but me. I was thrilled with the immensity of Harvard, its infinite opportunities, its august history and traditions—but desperately lonely. I didn't know which way to turn, how to meet people. Fellows passed me in the Yard, shouting gayly to one another; I saw parties off to Boston Saturday night, whooping and yelling on the back platform of the street car, and they passed hilariously singing under my window in the early dawn. Athletes and musicians and writers and statesmen were emerging from the ranks of the class. The freshman clubs were forming.

And I was out of it all. I "went out" for the college papers, and tried to make the freshman crew, even staying in Cambridge vacations to go down to the empty boathouse and plug away at the machines—and was the last man kicked off the squad before they went to New London. I got to know many fellows to nod to, and a very few intimately; but most of my friends were whirled off and up into prominence, and came to see me no more. One of them said he'd room with me sophomore year—but he was tipped off that I wasn't "the right sort" and openly drew away from me. And I, too, hurt a boy who was my friend. He was a Jew, a shy, rather melancholy person. We were always together, we two outsiders. I became irritated and morbid about it—it seemed I would never be part of the rich splendor of college life with him around—so I drew away from him. . . . It hurt him very much, and it taught me better. Since then he has forgiven it, and done wonderful things for me, and we are friends.

My second year was better. I was elected an editor of two of the papers, and knew more fellows. The fortunate and splendid youths, the aristocrats who filled the clubs and dominated college society, didn't seem so attractive. In two open contests, the trial for editor of the college daily paper and that for assistant manager of the varsity crew, I qualified easily for election; but the aristocrats blackballed me. However, that mattered less. During my freshman year I used to *pray* to be liked, to have friends, to be popular with the crowd. Now I had friends, plenty of them; and I have found that when I am working hard at something I love, friends come without my trying, and stay; and fear goes, and that sense of being lost which is so horrible.

From that time on I never felt out of it. I was never popular with the aristocrats; I was never elected to any clubs but one, and that one largely because of a dearth of members who could write lyrics for the annual show. But I was on the papers, was elected president of the Cosmopolitan Club, where forty-three nationalities met, became manager of the Musical Clubs, captain of the water-polo team, and an officer in many undergraduate activities. As song-leader of the cheering section, I had the supreme blissful sensa-



tion of swaying two thousand voices in great crashing choruses during the big football games. The more I met the college aristocrats, the more their cold, cruel stupidity repelled me. I began to pity them for their lack of imagination, and the narrowness of their glittering lives—clubs, athletics, society. College is like the world; outside there is the same class of people, dull and sated and blind.

Harvard University under President Eliot was unique. Individualism was carried to the point where a man who came for a good time could get through and graduate without having learned anything; but on the other hand, anyone could find there anything he wanted from all the world's store of learning. The undergraduates were practically free from control; they could live pretty much where they pleased, and do as they pleased—so long as they attended lectures. There was no attempt made by the authorities to weld the student body together, or to enforce any kind of uniformity. Some men came with allowances of fifteen thousand dollars a year pocket money, with automobiles and servants, living in gorgeous suites in palatial apartment houses; others in the same class starved in attic bedrooms.

All sorts of strange characters, of every race and mind, poets, philosophers, cranks of every twist, were in our class. The very hugeness of it prevented any one man from knowing more than a few of his classmates, though I managed to make the acquaintance of about five hundred of them. The aristocrats controlled the places of pride and power, except when a democratic revolution, such as occurred in my senior year, swept them off their feet; but they were so exclusive that most of the real life went on outside their ranks—and all the intellectual life of the student body. So many fine men were outside the charmed circle that, unlike most colleges, there was no disgrace in not being a "club man." What is known as "college spirit" was not very powerful; no odium attached to those who didn't go to football games and cheer. There was talk of the world, and daring thought, and intellectual insurgency; heresy has always been a Harvard and a New England tradition. Students themselves criticized the faculty for not educating them, attacked the sacred institution of intercollegiate athletics, sneered at undergraduate clubs so holy that no one dared mention their names. No matter what you were or what you did—at Harvard you could find your kind. It wasn't a breeder for masses of mediocresly educated young men equipped with "business" psychology; out of each class came a few creative minds, a few scholars, a few "gentlemen" with insolent manners, and a ruck of nobodies. . . . Things have changed now. I liked Harvard better then.

Toward the end of my college course two influences came into my life which had a good deal to do with shaping me. One was contact with Professor Copeland, who, under the pretense of teaching English composition, has stimulated generations of men to find color and strength and beauty in

books and in the world, and to express it again. The other was what I call, for lack of a better name, the manifestation of the modern spirit. Some men, notably Walter Lippmann, had been reading and thinking and talking about politics and economics, not as dry theoretical studies, but as live forces acting on the world, on the University even. They formed the Socialist Club, to study and discuss all modern social and economic theories, and began to experiment with the community in which they lived.

Under their stimulus the college political clubs, which had formerly been quadrennial mushroom growths for the purpose of drinking beer, parading and burning red fire, took on a new significance. The Club drew up a platform for the Socialist Party in the city elections. It had social legislation introduced into the Massachusetts Legislature. Its members wrote articles in the college papers challenging undergraduate ideals, and muckraked the University for not paying its servants living wages, and so forth. Out of the agitation sprang the Harvard Men's League for Women's Suffrage, the Single Tax Club, an Anarchist group. The faculty was petitioned for a course in socialism. Prominent radicals were invited to Cambridge to lecture. An open forum was started, to debate college matters and the issues of the day. The result of this movement upon the undergraduate world was potent. All over the place radicals sprang up, in music, painting, poetry, the theatre. The more serious college papers took a socialistic, or at least progressive tinge. Of course, all this made no ostensible difference in the look of Harvard society, and probably the clubmen and the athletes, who represented us to the world, never even heard of it. But it made me, and many others, realize that there was something going on in the dull outside world more thrilling than college activities, and turned our attention to the writings of men like H. G. Wells and Graham Wallas, wrenching us away from the Oscar Wildean diletantism that had possessed undergraduate *littérateurs* for generations.

After college Waldo Peirce and I went abroad as "bull-pushers" on a cattle-boat, for a year's happy-go-lucky wandering. Waldo rebelled at the smells and the ship's company, and jumped overboard off Boston Light, swimming back to shore and later taking the *Lusitania* to Liverpool; meanwhile, I was arrested for his murder, clapped in irons and brought before an Admiralty court at Manchester, where Waldo turned up in the nick of time. I tramped down across England alone, working on farms and sleeping in haystacks, meeting Peirce in London again. Then we hoofed it to Dover and tried to stow away on a Channel steamer for France—and got arrested in Calais, of course. Separating, we went through northern France on foot, to Rouen and Paris, and started on a wild automobile trip through Touraine to the Spanish border, and across; and I proceeded into Spain alone, having adventures. I spent the winter in Paris, with excursions around the country, letting it soak in. Then I came home to America to settle down and make my living.

Lincoln Steffens recommended me for a job on *The American Magazine*, where I stayed three years, reading manuscripts and writing stories and verses. More than any other man Lincoln Steffens has influenced my mind. I met him first while I was at Harvard, where he came loving youth, full of understanding, with the breath of the world clinging to him. I was afraid of him then—afraid of his wisdom, his seriousness—and we didn't talk. But when I came back from France I told him what I had seen and done, and he asked me what I wanted to do. I said I didn't know, except that I wanted to write. Steffens looked at me with that lovely smile. "You can do anything you want to," he said; and I believed him. Since then I have gone to him with my difficulties and troubles, and he has always listened while I solved them myself in the warmth of his understanding. Being with Steffens is to me like flashes of clear light; it is as if I see him, and myself, and the world, with new eyes. I tell him what I see and think, and it comes back to me beautiful, full of meaning. He does not judge or advise—he simply makes everything clear. There are two men who give me confidence in myself, who make me want to work, and to do nothing unworthy—Copeland and Steffens.

New York was an enchanted city to me. It was on an infinitely grander scale than Harvard. Everything was to be found there—it satisfied me utterly. I wandered about the streets, from the soaring imperial towers of downtown, along the East River docks, smelling of spices and the clipper ships of the past, through the swarming East Side—alien towns within towns—where the smoky flare of miles of clamorous pushcarts made a splendor of shabby streets; coming upon sudden shrill markets, dripping blood and fish-scales in the light of torches, the big Jewish women bawling their wares under the roaring great bridges; thrilling to the ebb and flow of human tides sweeping to work and back, west and east, south and north. I knew Chinatown, and Little Italy, and the quarter of the Syrians; the marionette theatre, Sharkey's and McSorley's saloons, the Bowery lodging houses and the places where the tramps gathered in winter; the Haymarket, the German Village, and all the dives of the Tenderloin. I spent all one summer night on top of a pier of the Williamsburg Bridge; I slept another night in a basket of squid in the Fulton Market, where the red and green and gold sea things glisten in the blue light of the sputtering arcs. The girls that walk the streets were friends of mine, and the drunken sailors off ships new-come from the world's end, and the Spanish longshoremen down on West Street.

I found wonderful obscure restaurants, where the foods of the whole world could be found. I knew how to get dope; where to go to hire a man to kill an enemy; what to do to get into gambling rooms and secret dance halls. I knew well the parks, and streets of palaces, the theatres and hotels; the ugly growth of the city spreading like a disease, the decrepit places whence life was ebbing, and the squares and streets where an old, beautiful leisurely existence was drowned in the mounting roar of the slums. I knew Washington Square, and the artists and writers, the near-Bohemians, the

radicals. I went to gangsters' balls at Tammany Hall, on excursions of the Tim Sullivan Association, to Coney Island on hot summer nights. . . . Within a block of my house was all the adventure of the world; within a mile was every foreign country.

In New York I first loved, and I first wrote of the things I saw, with a fierce joy of creation—and knew at last that I could write. There I got my first perceptions of the life of my time. The city and its people were an open book to me; everything had its story, dramatic, full of ironic tragedy and terrible humor. There I first saw that reality transcended all the fine poetic inventions of fastidiousness and medievalism. I was not happy or well long away from New York . . . I am not now, for that matter; but I cannot live continually in its heart any more. In the city I have no time for much but sensation and experience; but now I want some time of quiet, and leisure for thought, so I can extract from the richness of my life something beautiful and strong. I am living now in the country, within an hour of town, so I can go down occasionally and plunge into the sea of people, the roaring and the lights—and then come back here to write of it, in the quiet hills in sunshine and clean wind.

During this time I read a good deal of radical literature, attended meetings of all sorts, met socialists, anarchists, single-taxers, labor leaders, and besides, all the hair-splitting Utopians and petty doctrine-mongers who cling to skirts of Change. They interested me, so many different human types; and the livingness of theories which could dominate men and women captivated my imagination. On the whole, ideas alone didn't mean much to me. I had to see. In my rambles about the city I couldn't help but observe the ugliness of poverty and all its train of evil, the cruel inequality between rich people who had too many motor cars and poor people who didn't have enough to eat. It didn't come to me from books that the workers produced all the wealth of the world, which went to those who did not earn it.

The Lawrence strike of the textile workers had just ended, and the I.W.W. dominated the social and industrial horizon like a portent of the rising of the oppressed. That strike brought home to me hard the knowledge that the manufacturers get all they can out of labor, pay as little as they must, and permit the existence of great masses of the miserable unemployed in order to keep wages down; that the forces of the State are on the side of property against the propertyless. Our Socialist Party seemed to me duller than religion, and almost as little in touch with labor. The Paterson strike broke out. I met Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Tresca and the other leaders; they attracted me. I liked their understanding of the workers, their revolutionary thought, the boldness of their dream, the way immense crowds of people took fire and came alive under their leadership. Here was drama, change, democracy on the march and visible—a war of the people. I went to Paterson to watch it, was mistaken for a striker while walking the public

street, beaten by the police and jailed without any charge. In the jail I talked with exultant men who had blithely defied the lawless brutality of the city government and gone to prison laughing and singing. There were horrors in that jail too; men and boys shut up for months without trial, men going mad and dying, bestial cruelty and disease and filth—and all for the poor. When I came out I helped to organize the Pageant of the Paterson Strike, in Madison Square Garden, New York, drilling a thousand men and women in Paterson and bringing them across New Jersey to act out, before an immensely moved audience of twenty thousand people, the wretchedness of their lives and the glory of their revolt.

Since then I have seen and reported many strikes, most of them desperate struggles for the bare necessities of life; and all I have witnessed only confirms my first idea of the class struggle and its inevitability. I wish with all my heart that the proletariat would rise and take their rights—I don't see how else they will get them. Political relief is so slow to come, and year by year the opportunities of peaceful protest and lawful action are curtailed. But I am not sure any more that the working class is capable of revolution, peaceful or otherwise; the workers are so divided and bitterly hostile to each other, so badly led, so blind to their class interest. The War has been a terrible shatterer of faith in economic and political idealism. And yet I cannot give up the idea that out of democracy will be born the new world—richer, braver, freer, more beautiful. As for me, I don't know what I can do to help—I don't know yet. All I know is that my happiness is built on the misery of other people, that I eat because others go hungry, that I am clothed when other people go almost naked through the frozen cities in winter; and that fact poisons me, disturbs my serenity, makes me write propaganda when I would rather play—though not so much as it once did.

I quit my job to work on the Pageant, and when it was all over I went to pieces nervously, and friends took me abroad for the summer. The strike was starved and lost, the men went back to work dispirited and disillusioned, and the leaders, too, broke down under the long strain of the fight. The I.W.W. itself seemed smashed—indeed it has never recovered its old prestige. I got diphtheria in Italy, and came back to New York weak and despondent. For six months I did almost nothing. And then, through the interest of Lincoln Steffens, *The Metropolitan Magazine* asked me to go to Mexico as a war correspondent, and I knew that I must do it.

Villa had just captured Chihuahua when I got to the border, and was getting ready to move on Torreon. I made straight for Chihuahua, and there got a chance to accompany an American mining man down into the mountains of Durango. Hearing that an old half-bandit, half-general was moving to the front, I cut loose and joined him, riding with a wild troop of Mexican cavalry two weeks across the desert, seeing battle at close range, in which my companions were defeated and killed, and fleeing for my life across the

desert. I joined Villa then in his march on Torreón, and was in at the fall of that stronghold.

Altogether I was four months with the Constitutionalist armies in Mexico. When I first crossed the border deadliest fear gripped me. I was afraid of death, of mutilation, of a strange land and strange people whose speech and thought I did not know. But a terrible curiosity urged me on; I felt I *had to know* how I would act under fire, how I would get along with these primitive folks at war. And I discovered that bullets are not very terrifying, that the fear of death is not such a great thing, and that the Mexicans are wonderfully congenial. That four months of riding hundreds of miles across the blazing plains, sleeping on the ground with the *hombres*, dancing and carousing in looted haciendas all night after an all-day ride, being with them intimately in play, in battle, was perhaps the most satisfactory period of my life. I made good with these wild fighting men, and with myself. I loved them and I loved the life. I found myself again. I wrote better than I have ever written.

Then came the European War, to which I went as correspondent, spending a year and a half traveling in all the belligerent countries and on the front of five nations in battle. In Europe I found none of the spontaneity, none of the idealism of the Mexican revolution. It was a war of the workshops, and the trenches were factories turning out ruin—ruin of the spirit as well as of the body, the real and only death. Everything had halted but the engines of hate and destruction. European life, that flashed so many vital facets, ran in one channel, and runs in it now. There seems to me little to choose between the sides; both are horrible to me. The whole Great War is to me just a stoppage of the life and ferment of human evolution. I am waiting, waiting for it all to end, for life to resume so I can find my work.

In thinking it over, I find little in my thirty years that I can hold to. I haven't any God and don't want one; faith is only another word for finding oneself. In my life, as in most lives, I guess, love plays a tremendous part. I've had love affairs, passionate happiness, wretched maladjustments; hurt deeply and been deeply hurt. But at last I have found my friend and lover, thrilling and satisfying, closer to me than anyone has ever been. And now I don't care what comes.

## BRAVE MAN

*John Mason Brown (1945)*

"HI-YA, Ernie?" That's what they used to cry when they saw him. In their throats this was more than a salutation. It was also a question; a question which came from their hearts and brightened their eyes. They really cared. They wanted him to be feeling "fine."

No other military figure held a higher place in their affections than did

this unmilitary little man. They knew that in Ernie they had a friend. I say "Ernie" because the fact that he was known as Ernie was part of his character. A stranger would no more have thought of referring to him as "Mr. Pyle" than he would have dreamed of calling Bismarck "Otto," or Will Rogers "William." Although I knew Ernie slightly, I felt I knew him well. So did everyone who read him. He was that kind of man. I wish I had known him intimately.

I saw him several times in Europe last year. First, in Naples, when he had just returned from Cassino and I was headed that way. Next, in London, when the spring was there and all of us were waiting impatiently for the Invasion. Later, on the *Augusta*, where, when he came aboard to file his copy, the excitement which swept through that cruiser was like a monsoon. Finally, in Normandy. The last time I saw him was when, early one morning, several of us went in with him to that littered beach known as "Omaha" about which he was to write one of his finest stories.

When I met Ernie in Naples, his flat may have had furniture in it, but that furniture did not show. All I remember in the way of furnishings are people: young G. I.'s, airmen, and Army nurses. No canteen was ever more crowded than these small rooms. There was a difference, however; a sense of veneration, a centering of interest, such as no canteen knows. Ernie was that center.

These young people hovered about him like priests around an altar. He sat there like some benign god who refused to admit that he was being worshipped. More than hanging upon his words, these youngsters chinned themselves upon them. It took only a minute or two to realize how much Ernie meant to them, and how much they meant to him. He treated them with the solicitude most people reserve for Brass Hats. He showed them the same courtesy and respect which they showed him. He was more than a host. More than a wise uncle. More than an oracle, too. He was their friend and confidant; a person who palpably shared their interests and seemed to share their age. In his case age created no barrier. It did not lessen their affection for him; it merely increased their respect.

The strain of what he had undergone told heavily upon Ernie in Naples. He was so frail and thin that on the way home Bill McDermott, who had been as impressed by him as I was, likened him to Gandhi with his clothes on. Ernie was disturbingly pale. He was fighting not only against the enemy and for the G. I. with his typewriter. He was also fighting against anaemia. There was something of the blueness of his bright blue eyes even in the ivory whiteness of his skin.

When I saw Ernie again, it was, as I say, in London during those final suspenseful months which preceded D-Day. He looked made over. His color was no longer white. He told me he had been pinkened by red meat and rest.

We were having drinks late one afternoon in the crowded bar of the Dorchester. Two young airmen from a nearby Bomber Command came in

and sat next to us at the corner table. Men in uniform were always recognizing Ernie. Seeing him gave them great pleasure.

Ernie happened to be looking straight ahead of him, when one of the young pilots spotted him. "Isn't that Ernie Pyle?" he whispered across tables to me. When I signaled a "yes" with my head, he nudged his companion. The two of them were as excited as if they had just completed a successful mission over Berchtesgaden.

I told Ernie what had happened, and he asked them both over. Long after I had left, he remained with them. His friendship did not stop with that chance meeting. He visited them at their Command, as any reader of "Brave Men" remembers. He wanted to talk to any man in uniform, especially if he wasn't too highly placed. What is more surprising, every man in uniform wanted to talk to him.

The last time I saw Ernie was when we climbed down the *Augusta's* net into a small boat and headed for the beaches. With us was the Navy's Charles E. Thomas, Pho. M. 1/c. As is the way of photographers, Thomas was not traveling light. He was freighted down with a large movie camera, while I was carrying his no less sizable still camera. When we waded ashore, Ernie was next to me. Halfway in, he said, "Come on, give it to me now. It's my turn." I hesitated because he looked so frail and the camera was so heavy. I soon realized, however, that Ernie meant what he said. Not to have given him the camera would have been to hurt his feelings. His carrying it was a point of pride; a principle of behavior also. When he took it, there was a moment when I thought that both he and the camera were lost for good. But, though he sagged uncertainly for an instant he managed to get both it and himself safely ashore.

His insistence upon sharing the burden was typical of him. It made me understand all the more fully why, as we trudged down those improvised roads, dusty and traffic-jammed, one tired G. I. after another would smile upon seeing him, saying either, "Jeez, there's Ernie Pyle" or the inevitable, "Hi-ya, Ernie. Glad to see ya."

Ernie was more than a little bundle of nerves and perceptions, of high courage and deep sympathy. He was the G. I.'s walking delegate to history. If he shared their feelings, it was because he shared their dangers. In the past there may have been a girl known as the daughter of the regiment. But Ernie was a fellow who had been adopted by the whole Army to serve as its spokesman; by the Navy, too, at least when it could tear him away from a foxhole. No one in this war has been able to do as much as he did to transform the blood and sweat of battle into printer's ink. Or brought the war with such intimacy into more distant homes.

When, in "Brave Men," he wrote, "I'm a rabid one-man movement bent on tracking down and stamping out everybody in the world who doesn't fully appreciate the common front-line soldier," Ernie was only stating a credo which explained his unique strength as a war writer. Although the



common cause was his, he had a cause of his own. He did not want the forgotten men who were making history to remain forgotten.

In physical appearance and mental attitude, Ernie had no connection with either the Richard Harding Davis type of war correspondent or the tough swaggerers so dear to Hollywood. With his balding forehead and his fluffy gray hair, he looked more like a character actor than a lead.

Heroics were as foreign to him as tenderness was natural. He did not glorify battle; he admired the men who could endure it. He hated war as heartily as do most of the sailors and soldiers who fought beside him. His hatred of it colors many of his best passages. Yet he never wrote about it as an observer; always as a participant. He was a new kind of war correspondent—democracy's perfect symbol in a democratic war.

What was exceptional about him was his *seeming* averageness; his ability to enclose every man's war within the parentheses of his own personality. Scores of correspondents have had his courage, but none has had his heart. Ernie remained the small-town boy in a big-time war. He was one Little Man writing about all the others in this Little Man's war. Writing for them, too. Again and again he proved himself their equal in bigness and in gallantry. He was different from them mainly because he was articulate. This is why the typewriter was his weapon, and one that, in the midst of battle, he could use superlatively.

A few of Ernie's readers (a few, because they are the ones who sneered at his simplicities) have tried to suggest that Ernie's columns were on a par with the letters the G. I.'s might have written home, had they been allowed to send them. These scoffers, I believe, have flattered the G. I.'s, and done Ernie a serious injustice. They might as well have been saying what Charles Lamb said when, after discussing Shakespeare with Wordsworth one night, he stuttered gleefully, "W-W-William says he could have written *H-H-Hamlet* if only he had had the m-m-ind to."

There are millions of G. I.'s, thousands of whom write extremely well, and some of whom, in this letter or in that, have done the best writing to have come out of the war. There are countless professional correspondents, too. But there was, and will be, only one Ernie Pyle. He may have been no Pater. Which was all to the good. Yet he had a neat, clean, driving style of his own, and a beagle's eye for details.

He could stipple a paragraph with these details. He advanced them in short sentences, rich in color. He made these details do their full emotional duty. He stabbed with them, too. The only deceptive feature of his style was the ease with which he could persuade the reader that he could have written like Ernie. Part of Ernie's skill was his adroitness in hiding it.

Ernie may have been as careful to write down the names and home-town addresses of all the sailors and soldiers he met as if he were covering a meeting of the Rotary Club. He was, however, able to endow the telephone book with a heart. He did not do this as a cheap reader-getting stunt. It was part of

his kindness, and a proof of his understanding. It was one of the many ways in which he bridged the wide chasm separating those overseas from those here.

He knew what these names and addresses meant to the men at the front no less than to their families and friends back home. Soldiers and sailors always remained to Ernie citizens in uniform, anxious to get home. To him they were local boys making good in their living, their dying, and their enduring. He was anxious to get them home again, if it was only in print. Ernie did this as no other person writing about this war has been able to do.

His books, *Here Is Your War* and *Brave Men*, may be hard, if not impossible, to read continuously. They suffer, as all newspaper reprints do, when encountered within the covers of a book. This does not lessen their value, or mean that their individual entries are not excellent. It is only one measure of their high virtues as journalism. When it comes to a day-by-day record of the struggles for Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Normandy, Ernie's books will always remain the G. I.'s Bible.

He could tell a story as movingly as his remarkable account of the passage by muleback on a moonlight night of Captain Waskow's body down an Italian mountain. He could describe a scene as unforgettably as he did when he recorded what he saw as he strolled along the Normandy beaches. He could capture the feeling of a convoy, the agony of a hospital tent, or the emotions of men moving into battle, as graphically as in a recent dispatch from the Pacific he recorded the pantomime of the signalmen on the carrier. As a writer, Ernie was no less good than as a man.

The only columns by Ernie which distressed me were those he wrote before he headed for the Pacific. I have in mind those embarrassing "fillers" about the burdens of being famous. They seemed to be in the worst of bad taste. Instead of adding to his legend, I thought, and feared, they might subtract from it. They made me worry about Ernie. They worried me until I realized they were the final indications of his ingenuousness and his honesty. He *was* famous, and his fame bothered him. He wrote about it without affectation, exactly as he had written about all the other unpleasant things he had survived.

Ernie had run more risks and seen more fighting than most. Even before Normandy, he told me he thought his number might be up. He did not want to go to the Pacific. "I am going," wrote he, "simply because there's a war on and I am part of it. And I have known all the time I was going back. I am going simply because I have got to go—and I hate it."

Immediately after the report of Ernie's death on Ie had reached this country, President Truman issued a statement at the White House. It was the second of its kind he had issued since Franklin Roosevelt's passing. "The nation," began Mr. Truman, "is quickly saddened again by the death of Ernie Pyle." The notable word in that statement, the word which stands out almost as if

printed in capitals, is the "again." Surely no fancy adjective ever paid so high a compliment as that simple adverb which linked the sadness felt because of a correspondent's passing with the grief we had all known because of President Roosevelt's dying.

## THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER

*Stephen Vincent Benét (1936)*

It's a story they tell in the border country, where Massachusetts joins Vermont and New Hampshire.

Yes, Dan'l Webster's dead—or, at least, they buried him. But every time there's a thunderstorm around Marshfield, they say you can hear his rolling voice in the hollows of the sky. And they say that if you go to his grave and speak loud and clear, "Dan'l Webster—Dan'l Webster!" the ground'll begin to shiver and the trees begin to shake. And after a while you'll hear a deep voice saying, "Neighbor, how stands the Union?" Then you better answer the Union stands as she stood, rock-bottomed and copper-sheathed, one and indivisible, or he's liable to rear right out of the ground. At least, that's what I was told when I was a youngster.

You see, for a while, he was the biggest man in the country. He never got to be President, but he was the biggest man. There were thousands that trusted in him right next to God Almighty, and they told stories about him and all the things that belonged to him that were like the stories of patriarchs and such. They said, when he stood up to speak, stars and stripes came right out in the sky, and once he spoke against a river and made it sink into the ground. They said, when he walked the woods with his fishing rod, Killall, the trout would jump out of the streams right into his pockets, for they knew it was no use putting up a fight against him; and, when he argued a case, he could turn on the harps of the blessed and the shaking of the earth underground. That was the kind of man he was, and his big farm up at Marshfield was suitable to him. The chickens he raised were all white meat down through the drumsticks, the cows were tended like children, and the big ram he called Goliath had horns with a curl like a morning-glory vine and could butt through an iron door. But Dan'l wasn't one of your gentlemen farmers; he knew all the ways of the land, and he'd be up by candlelight to see that the chores got done. A man with a mouth like a mastiff, a brow like a mountain and eyes like burning anthracite—that was Dan'l Webster in his prime. And the biggest case he argued never got written down in the books, for he argued it against the devil, nip and tuck and no holds barred. And this is the way I used to hear it told.

There was a man named Jabez Stone, lived at Cross Corners, New Hampshire. He wasn't a bad man to start with, but he was an unlucky man. If he

planted corn, he got borers; if he planted potatoes, he got blight. He had good-enough land, but it didn't prosper him; he had a decent wife and children, but the more children he had, the less there was to feed them. If stones cropped up in his neighbor's field, boulders boiled up in his; if he had a horse with the spavins, he'd trade it for one with the staggers and give something extra. There's some folks bound to be like that, apparently. But one day Jabez Stone got sick of the whole business.

He'd been plowing that morning and he'd just broke the plowshare on a rock that he could have sworn hadn't been there yesterday. And, as he stood looking at the plowshare, the off horse began to cough—that ropy kind of cough that means sickness and horse doctors. There were two children down with the measles, his wife was ailing, and he had a whitlow on his thumb. It was about the last straw for Jabez Stone. "I vow," he said, and he looked around him kind of desperate—"I vow it's enough to make a man want to sell his soul to the devil! And I would, too, for two cents!"

Then he felt a kind of queerness come over him at having said what he'd said; though, naturally, being a New Hampshireman, he wouldn't take it back. But, all the same, when it got to be evening and, as far as he could see, no notice had been taken, he felt relieved in his mind, for he was a religious man. But notice is always taken, sooner or later, just like the Good Book says. And, sure enough, next day, about suppertime, a soft-spoken, dark-dressed stranger drove up in a handsome buggy and asked for Jabez Stone.

Well, Jabez told his family it was a lawyer, come to see him about a legacy. But he knew who it was. He didn't like the looks of the stranger, nor the way he smiled with his teeth. They were white teeth, and plentiful—some say they were filed to a point, but I wouldn't vouch for that. And he didn't like it when the dog took one look at the stranger and ran away howling, with his tail between his legs. But having passed his word, more or less, he stuck to it, and they went out behind the barn and made their bargain. Jabez Stone had to prick his finger to sign, and the stranger lent him a silver pin. The wound healed clean, but it left a little white scar.

After that, all of a sudden, things began to pick up and prosper for Jabez Stone. His cows got fat and his horses sleek, his crops were the envy of the neighborhood, and lightning might strike all over the valley, but it wouldn't strike his barn. Pretty soon, he was one of the prosperous people of the country; they asked him to stand for selectman, and he stood for it; there began to be talk of running him for state senate. All in all, you might say the Stone family was as happy and contented as cats in a dairy. And so they were, except for Jabez Stone.

He'd been contented enough, the first few years. It's a great thing when bad luck turns; it drives most other things out of your head. True, every now and then, especially in rainy weather, the little white scar on his finger would give him a twinge. And once a year, punctual as clockwork, the stranger

with the handsome buggy would come driving by. But the sixth year, the stranger lighted, and, after that, his peace was over for Jabez Stone.

The stranger came up through the lower field, switching his boots with a cane—they were handsome black boots, but Jabez Stone never liked the look of them, particularly the toes. And, after he'd passed the time of day, he said, "Well, Mr. Stone, you're a hummer! It's a very pretty property you've got here, Mr. Stone."

"Well, some might favor it and others might not," said Jabez Stone, for he was a New Hampshireman.

"Oh, no need to decry your industry!" said the stranger, very easy, showing his teeth in a smile. "After all, we know what's been done, and it's been according to contract and specifications. So when—ahem—the mortgage falls due next year, you shouldn't have any regrets."

"Speaking of that mortgage, mister," said Jabez Stone, and he looked around for help to the earth and the sky, "I'm beginning to have one or two doubts about it."

"Doubts?" said the stranger, not quite so pleasantly.

"Why, yes," said Jabez Stone. "This being the U. S. A. and me always having been a religious man." He cleared his throat and got bolder. "Yes, sir," he said, "I'm beginning to have considerable doubts as to that mortgage holding in court."

"There's courts and courts," said the stranger, clicking his teeth. "Still, we might as well have a look at the original document." And he hauled out a big black pocketbook, full of papers. "Sherwin, Slater, Stevens, Stone," he muttered. "I, Jabez Stone, for a term of seven years— Oh, it's quite in order, I think."

But Jabez Stone wasn't listening, for he saw something else flutter out of the black pocketbook. It was something that looked like a moth, but it wasn't a moth. And as Jabez Stone stared at it, it seemed to speak to him in a small sort of piping voice, terrible small and thin, but terrible human.

"Neighbor Stone!" it squeaked. "Neighbor Stone! Help me! For God's sake, help me!"

But before Jabez Stone could stir hand or foot, the stranger whipped out a big bandanna handkerchief, caught the creature in it, just like a butterfly, and started tying up the ends of the bandanna.

"Sorry for the interruption," he said. "As I was saying—"

But Jabez Stone was shaking all over like a scared horse.

"That's Miser Stevens' voice!" he said, in a croak. "And you've got him in your handkerchief!"

The stranger looked a little embarrassed.

"Yes, I really should have transferred him to the collecting box," he said with a simper, "but there were some rather unusual specimens there and I didn't want them crowded. Well, well, these little contretemps will occur."

"I don't know what you mean by contertan," said Jabez Stone, "but that was Miser Stevens' voice! And he ain't dead! You can't tell me he is! He was just as spry and mean as a woodchuck, Tuesday!"

"In the midst of life—" said the stranger, kind of pious. "Listen!" Then a bell began to toll in the valley and Jabez Stone listened, with the sweat running down his face. For he knew it was tolled for Miser Stevens and that he was dead.

"These long-standing accounts," said the stranger with a sigh; "one really hates to close them. But business is business."

He still had the bandanna in his hand, and Jabez Stone felt sick as he saw the cloth struggle and flutter.

"Are they all as small as that?" he asked hoarsely.

"Small?" said the stranger. "Oh, I see what you mean. Why, they vary." He measured Jabez Stone with his eyes, and his teeth showed. "Don't worry, Mr. Stone," he said. "You'll go with a very good grade. I wouldn't trust you outside the collecting box. Now, a man like Dan'l Webster, of course—well, we'd have to build a special box for him, and even at that, I imagine the wing spread would astonish you. He'd certainly be a prize. I wish we could see our way clear to him. But, in your case, as I was saying—"

"Put that handkerchief away!" said Jabez Stone, and he began to beg and to pray. But the best he could get at the end was a three years' extension, with conditions.

But till you make a bargain like that, you've got no idea of how fast four years can run. By the last months of those years, Jabez Stone's known all over the state and there's talk of running him for governor—and it's dust and ashes in his mouth. For every day, when he gets up, he thinks, "There's one more night gone," and every night when he lies down, he thinks of the black pocketbook and the soul of Miser Stevens, and it makes him sick at heart. Till, finally, he can't bear it any longer, and, in the last days of the last year, he hitches up his horse and drives off to see Dan'l Webster. For Dan'l was born in New Hampshire, only a few miles from Cross Corners, and it's well known that he has a particular soft spot for old neighbors.

It was early in the morning when he got to Marshfield, but Dan'l was up already, talking Latin to the farm hands and wrestling with the ram, Goliath, and trying out a new trotter and working up speeches to make against John C. Calhoun. But when he heard a New Hampshireman had come to see him, he dropped everything else he was doing, for that was Dan'l's way. He gave Jabez Stone a breakfast that five men couldn't eat, went into the living history of every man and woman in Cross Corners, and finally asked him how he could serve him.

Jabez Stone allowed that it was a kind of mortgage case.

"Well, I haven't pleaded a mortgage case in a long time, and I don't

generally plead now, except before the Supreme Court," said Dan'l, "but if I can, I'll help you."

"Then I've got hope for the first time in ten years," said Jabez Stone, and told him the details.

Dan'l walked up and down as he listened, hands behind his back, now and then asking a question, now and then plunging his eyes at the floor, as if they'd bore through it like gimlets. When Jabez Stone had finished, Dan'l puffed out his cheeks and blew. Then he turned to Jabez Stone and a smile broke over his face like the sunrise over Monadnock.

"You've certainly given yourself the devil's own row to hoe, Neighbor Stone," he said, "but I'll take your case."

"You'll take it?" said Jabez Stone, hardly daring to believe.

"Yes," said Dan'l Webster. "I've got about seventy-five other things to do and the Missouri Compromise to straighten out, but I'll take your case. For if two New Hampshiremen aren't a match for the devil, we might as well give the country back to the Indians."

Then he shook Jabez Stone by the hand and said, "Did you come down here in a hurry?"

"Well, I admit I made time," said Jabez Stone.

"You'll go back faster," said Dan'l Webster, and he told 'em to hitch up Constitution and Constellation to the carriage. They were matched grays with one white forefoot, and they stepped like greased lightning.

Well, I won't describe how excited and pleased the whole Stone family was to have the great Dan'l Webster for a guest, when they finally got there. Jabez Stone had lost his hat on the way, blown off when they overtook a wind, but he didn't take much account of that. But after supper he sent the family off to bed, for he had most particular business with Mr. Webster. Mrs. Stone wanted them to sit in the front parlor, but Dan'l Webster knew front parlors and said he preferred the kitchen. So it was there they sat, waiting for the stranger, with a jug on the table between them and a bright fire on the hearth—the stranger being scheduled to show up on the stroke of midnight, according to specification.

Well, most men wouldn't have asked for better company than Dan'l Webster and a jug. But with every tick of the clock Jabez Stone got sadder and sadder. His eyes roved round, and though he sampled the jug you could see he couldn't taste it. Finally, on the stroke of 11:30 he reached over and grabbed Dan'l Webster by the arm.

"Mr. Webster, Mr. Webster!" he said, and his voice was shaking with fear and a desperate courage. "For God's sake, Mr. Webster, harness your horses and get away from this place while you can!"

"You've brought me a long way, neighbor, to tell me you don't like my company," said Dan'l Webster, quite peaceable, pulling at the jug.

"Miserable wretch that I am!" groaned Jabez Stone. "I've brought you a

devilish way, and now I see my folly. Let him take me if he wills. I don't hanker after it, I must say, but I can stand it. But you're the Union's stay and New Hampshire's pride! He mustn't get you, Mr. Webster! He mustn't get you!"

Dan'l Webster looked at the distracted man, all gray and shaking in the firelight, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm obliged to you, Neighbor Stone," he said gently. "It's kindly thought of. But there's a jug on the table and a case in hand. And I never left a jug or a case half finished in my life." And just at that moment there was a sharp rap on the door.

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster, very coolly, "I thought your clock was a trifle slow, Neighbor Stone." He stepped to the door and opened it. "Come in!" he said.

The stranger came in—very dark and tall he looked in the firelight. He was carrying a box under his arm—a black, japanned box with little air holes in the lid. At the sight of the box, Jabez Stone gave a low cry and shrank into a corner of the room.

"Mr. Webster, I presume," said the stranger, very polite, but with his eyes glowing like a fox's deep in the woods.

"Attorney of record for Jabez Stone," said Dan'l Webster, but his eyes were glowing too. "Might I ask your name?"

"I've gone by a good many," said the stranger carelessly. "Perhaps Scratch will do for the evening. I'm often called that in these regions."

Then he sat down at the table and poured himself a drink from the jug. The liquor was cold in the jug, but it came steaming into the glass.

"And now," said the stranger, smiling and showing his teeth, "I shall call upon you, as a law-abiding citizen, to assist me in taking possession of my property."

Well, with that the argument began—and it went hot and heavy. At first, Jabez Stone had a flicker of hope, but when he saw Dan'l Webster being forced back at point after point, he just sat scrunched in his corner, with his eyes on that japanned box. For there wasn't any doubt as to the deed or the signature—that was the worst of it. Dan'l Webster twisted and turned and thumped his fist on the table, but he couldn't get away from that. He offered to compromise the case; the stranger wouldn't hear of it. He pointed out the property had increased in value, and state senators ought to be worth more; the stranger stuck to the letter of the law. He was a great lawyer, Dan'l Webster, but we know who's the King of Lawyers, as the Good Book tells us, and it seemed as if, for the first time, Dan'l Webster had met his match.

Finally, the stranger yawned a little. "Your spirited efforts on behalf of your client do you credit, Mr. Webster," he said, "but if you have no more arguments to adduce, I'm rather pressed for time—" and Jabez Stone shuddered.

Dan'l Webster's brow looked dark as a thundercloud. "Pressed or not,



you shall not have this man!" he thundered. "Mr. Stone is an American citizen, and no American citizen may be forced into the service of a foreign prince. We fought England for that in '12 and we'll fight all hell for it again!"

"Foreign?" said the stranger. "And who calls me a foreigner?"

"Well, I never yet heard of the dev—of your claiming American citizenship," said Dan'l Webster with surprise.

"And who with better right?" said the stranger, with one of his terrible smiles. "When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on her deck. Am I not in your books and stories and beliefs, from the first settlements on? Am I not spoken of, still, in every church in New England? 'Tis true the North claims me for a Southerner, and South for a Northerner, but I am neither. I am merely an honest American like yourself—and of the best descent—for, to tell the truth, Mr. Webster, though I don't like to boast of it, my name is older in this country than yours."

"Aha!" said Dan'l Webster, with the veins standing out in his forehead. "Then I stand on the Constitution! I demand a trial for my client!"

"The case is hardly one for an ordinary court," said the stranger, his eyes flickering. "And, indeed, the lateness of the hour—"

"Let it be any court you choose, so it is an American judge and an American jury!" said Dan'l Webster in his pride. "Let it be the quick or the dead; I'll abide the issue!"

"You have said it," said the stranger, and pointed his finger at the door. And with that, and all of a sudden, there was a rushing of wind outside and a noise of footsteps. They came, clear and distinct, through the night. And yet, they were not like the footsteps of living men.

"In God's name, who comes by so late?" cried Jabez Stone, in an agony of fear.

"The jury Mr. Webster demands," said the stranger, sipping at his boiling glass. "You must pardon the rough appearance of one or two; they will have come a long way."

And with that the fire burned blue and the door blew open and twelve men entered, one by one.

If Jabez Stone had been sick with terror before, he was blind with terror now. For there was Walter Butler, the loyalist, who spread fire and horror through the Mohawk Valley in the times of the Revolution; and there was Simon Girty, the renegade, who saw white men burned at the stake and whooped with the Indians to see them burn. His eyes were green, like a catamount's, and the stains of his hunting shirt did not come from the blood of the deer. King Philip was there, wild and proud as he had been in life, with the great gash in his head that gave him his death wound, and cruel Governor Dale, who broke men on the wheel. There was Morton of Merry Mount,

who so vexed the Plymouth Colony, with his flushed, loose, handsome face and his hate of the godly. There was Teach, the bloody pirate, with his black beard curling on his breast. The Reverend John Smect, with his strangler's hands and his Geneva gown, walked as daintily as he had to the gallows. The red print of the rope was still around his neck, but he carried a perfumed handkerchief in one hand. One and all, they came into the room with the fires of hell still upon them, and the stranger named their names and their deeds as they came, till the tale of twelve was told. Yet the stranger had told the truth—they had all played a part in America.

"Are you satisfied with the jury, Mr. Webster?" said the stranger mockingly, when they had taken their places.

The sweat stood upon Dan'l Webster's brow, but his voice was clear.

"Quite satisfied," he said. "Though I miss General Arnold from the company."

"Benedict Arnold is engaged upon other business," said the stranger, with a glower. "Ah, you asked for a justice, I believe."

He pointed his finger once more, and a tall man, soberly clad in Puritan garb, with the burning gaze of the fanatic, stalked into the room and took his judge's place.

"Justice Hathorne is a jurist of experience," said the stranger. "He presided at certain witch trials once held in Salem. There were others who repented of the business later, but not he."

"Repent of such notable wonders and undertakings?" said the stern old justice. "Nay, hang them—hang them all!" And he muttered to himself in a way that struck ice into the soul of Jabez Stone.

Then the trial began, and, as you might expect, it didn't look anyways good for the defense. And Jabez Stone didn't make much of a witness in his own behalf. He took one look at Simon Girty and screeched, and they had to put him back in his corner in a kind of swoon.

It didn't halt the trial, though; the trial went on, as trials do. Dan'l Webster had faced some hard juries and hanging judges in his time, but this was the hardest he'd ever faced, and he knew it. They sat there with a kind of glitter in their eyes, and the stranger's smooth voice went on and on. Every time he'd raise an objection, it'd be "Objection sustained," but whenever Dan'l objected, it'd be "Objection denied." Well, you couldn't expect fair play from a fellow like this Mr. Scratch.

It got to Dan'l in the end, and he began to heat, like iron in the forge. When he got up to speak he was going to flay that stranger with every trick known to the law, and the judge and jury too. He didn't care if it was contempt of court or what would happen to him for it. He didn't care any more what happened to Jabez Stone. He just got madder and madder, thinking of what he'd say. And yet, curiously enough, the more he thought about it, the less he was able to arrange his speech in his mind.

Till, finally, it was time for him to get up on his feet, and he did so, all ready to bust out with lightnings and denunciations. But before he started he looked over the judge and jury for a moment, such being his custom. And he noticed the glitter in their eyes was twice as strong as before, and they all leaned forward. Like hounds just before they get the fox, they looked, and the blue mist of evil in the room thickened as he watched them. Then he saw what he'd been about to do, and he wiped his forehead, as a man might who's just escaped falling into a pit in the dark.

For it was him they'd come for, not only Jabez Stone. He read it in the glitter of their eyes and in the way the stranger hid his mouth with one hand. And if he fought them with their own weapons, he'd fall into their power; he knew that, though he couldn't have told you how. It was his own anger and horror that burned in their eyes, and he'd have to wipe that out or the case was lost. He stood there for a moment, his black eyes burning like anthracite. And then he began to speak.

He started off in a low voice, though you could hear every word. They say he could call on the harps of the blessed when he chose. And this was just as simple and easy as a man could talk. But he didn't start out by condemning or reviling. He was talking about the things that make a country a country, and a man a man.

And he began with the simple things that everybody's known and felt—the freshness of a fine morning when you're young, and the taste of food when you're hungry, and the new day that's every day when you're a child. He took them up and he turned them in his hands. They were good things for any man. But without freedom, they sickened. And when he talked of those enslaved, and the sorrows of slavery, his voice got like a big bell. He talked of the early days of America and the men who had made those days. It wasn't a spread-eagle speech, but he made you see it. He admitted all the wrong that had ever been done. But he showed how, out of the wrong and the right, the suffering and the starvations, something new had come. And everybody had played a part in it, even the traitors.

Then he turned to Jabez Stone and showed him as he was—an ordinary man who'd had hard luck, and wanted to change it. And, because he'd wanted to change it, now he was going to be punished for all eternity. And yet there was good in Jabez Stone, and he showed that good. He was hard and mean, in some ways, but he was a man. There was sadness in being a man, but it was a proud thing too. And he showed what the pride of it was till you couldn't help feeling it. Yes, even in hell, if a man was a man, you'd know it. And he wasn't pleading for any one person any more, though his voice rang like an organ. He was telling the story and the failures and the endless journey of mankind. They got tricked and trapped and bamboozled, but it was a great journey. And no demon that was ever foaled could know the inwardness of it—it took a man to do that.

The fire began to die on the hearth and the wind before morning to blow. The light was getting gray in the room when Dan'l Webster finished. And his words came back at the end to New Hampshire ground, and the one spot of land that each man loves and clings to. He painted a picture of that, and to each one of that jury he spoke of things long forgotten. For his voice could search the heart, and that was his gift and his strength. And to one, his voice was like the forest and its secrecy, and to another like the sea and the storms of the sea; and one heard the cry of his lost nation in it, and another saw a little harmless scene he hadn't remembered for years. But each saw something. And when Dan'l Webster finished he didn't know whether or not he'd saved Jabez Stone. But he knew he'd done a miracle. For the glitter was gone from the eyes of judge and jury, and, for the moment, they were men again, and knew they were men.

"The defense rests," said Dan'l Webster, and stood there like a mountain. His ears were still ringing with his speech, and he didn't hear anything else till he heard Judge Hathorne say, "The jury will retire to consider its verdict."

Walter Butler rose in his place and his face had a dark, gay pride on it.

"The jury has considered its verdict," he said, and looked the stranger full in the eye. "We find for the defendant, Jabez Stone."

With that, the smile left the stranger's face, but Walter Butler did not flinch.

"Perhaps 'tis not strictly in accordance with the evidence," he said, "but even the damned may salute the eloquence of Mr. Webster."

With that, the long crow of a rooster split the gray morning sky, and judge and jury were gone from the room like a puff of smoke and as if they had never been there. The stranger turned to Dan'l Webster, smiling wryly. "Major Butler was always a bold man," he said. "I had not thought him quite so bold. Nevertheless, my congratulations, as between two gentlemen."

"I'll have that paper first, if you please," said Dan'l Webster, and he took it and tore it into four pieces. It was queerly warm to the touch. "And now," he said, "I'll have you!" and his hand came down like a bear trap on the stranger's arm. For he knew that once you bested anybody like Mr. Scratch in fair fight, his power on you was gone. And he could see that Mr. Scratch knew it too.

The stranger twisted and wriggled, but he couldn't get out of that grip. "Come, come, Mr. Webster," he said, smiling palely. "This sort of thing is ridic—ouch!—is ridiculous. If you're worried about the costs of the case, naturally, I'd be glad to pay—"

"And so you shall!" said Dan'l Webster, shaking him till his teeth rattled. "For you'll sit right down at that table and draw up a document, promising never to bother Jabez Stone nor his heirs or assigns nor any other New Hampshireman till doomsday! For any hades we want to raise in this state, we can raise ourselves, without assistance from strangers."

"Ouch!" said the stranger. "Ouch! Well, they never did run very big to the barrel, but—ouch!—I agree!"

So he sat down and drew up the document. But Dan'l Webster kept his hand on his coat collar all the time.

"And, now, may I go?" said the stranger, quite humble, when Dan'l'd seen the document was in proper and legal form.

"Go?" said Dan'l, giving him another shake. "I'm still trying to figure out what I'll do with you. For you've settled the costs of the case, but you haven't settled with me. I think I'll take you back to Marshfield," he said, kind of reflective. "I've got a ram there named Goliath that can butt through an iron door. I'd kind of like to turn you loose in his field and see what he'd do."

Well, with that the stranger began to beg and to plead. And he begged and he pled so humbly that finally Dan'l, who was naturally kindhearted, agreed to let him go. The stranger seemed terribly grateful for that and said, just to show they were friends, he'd tell Dan'l's fortune before leaving. So Dan'l agreed to that, though he didn't take much stock in fortune-tellers ordinarily.

But, naturally the stranger was a little different. Well, he pried and he peered at the lines in Dan'l's hands. And he told him one thing and another that was quite remarkable. But they were all in the past.

"Yes, all that's true, and it happened," said Dan'l Webster. "But what's to come in the future?"

The stranger grinned, kind of happily, and shook his head. "The future's not as you think it," he said. "It's dark. You have a great ambition, Mr. Webster."

"I have," said Dan'l firmly, for everybody knew he wanted to be President.

"It seems almost within your grasp," said the stranger, "but you will not attain it. Lesser men will be made President and you will be passed over."

"And, if I am, I'll still be Daniel Webster," said Dan'l. "Say on."

"You have two strong sons," said the stranger, shaking his head. "You look to found a line. But each will die in war and neither reach greatness."

"Live or die, they are still my sons," said Dan'l Webster. "Say on."

"You have made great speeches," said the stranger. "You will make more."

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster.

"But the last great speech you make will turn many of your own against you," said the stranger. "They will call you Ichabod; they will call you by other names. Even in New England some will say you have turned your coat and sold your country, and their voices will be loud against you till you die."

"So it is an honest speech, it does not matter what men say," said Dan'l Webster. Then he looked at the stranger and their glances locked.

"One question," he said. "I have fought for the Union all my life. Will I see that fight won against those who would tear it apart?"

"Not while you live," said the stranger, grimly, "But it will be won. And

after you are dead, there are thousands who will fight for your cause, because of words that you spoke."

"Why, then, you long-barreled, slab-sided, lantern-jawed, fortune-telling note shaver!" said Dan'l Webster, with a great roar of laughter, "be off with you to your own place before I put my mark on you! For, by the thirteen original colonies, I'd go to the Pit itself to save the Union!"

And with that he drew back his foot for a kick that would have stunned a horse. It was only the tip of his shoe that caught the stranger, but he went flying out of the door with his collecting box under his arm.

"And now," said Dan'l Webster, seeing Jabez Stone beginning to rouse from his swoon, "let's see what's left in the jug, for it's dry work talking all night. I hope there's pie for breakfast, Neighbor Stone."

But they say that whenever the devil comes near Marshfield, even now, he gives it a wide berth. And he hasn't been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.

## THE BET

*Anton Chekov (1888)*

### I

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christian states. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge *a priori*, the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object—to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."

"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker, "Gentlemen, I stake two millions!"

"Agreed! You stake two millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man.

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

"Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two millions are a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you."

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: "What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two millions? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money. . . ."

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a music instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted—books, music, wine, and so on—in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there *exactly* fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1876, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to

break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him two millions.

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character; novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies—so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

"My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his



ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

## II

The old banker remembered all this, and thought:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two millions. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined."

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation, and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune, and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair. "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life; let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house, and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat and went out of the house.

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the

hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy-chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's, and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated, aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep. . . . In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

"Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here. . . ."

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

"For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women. . . . Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elbruz and Mount Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God. . . . In your

books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms. . . .

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

"You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sorts, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you.

"To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact. . . ."

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

## THE PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH

*Walter Van Tilburg Clark (1945)*

THE RED sunset, with narrow, black cloud strips like threats across it, lay on the curved horizon of the prairie. The air was still and cold, and in it settled the mute darkness and greater cold of night. High in the air there was wind, for through the veil of the dusk the clouds could be seen gliding rapidly south and changing shapes. A queer sensation of torment, of two-sided,

unpredictable nature, arose from the stillness of the earth air beneath the violence of the upper air. Out of the sunset, through the dead, matted grass and isolated weed stalks of the prairie, crept the narrow and deeply rutted remains of a road. In the road, in places, there were crusts of shallow, brittle ice. There were little islands of an old oiled pavement in the road too, but most of it was mud, now frozen rigid. The frozen mud still bore the toothed impress of great tanks, and a wanderer on the neighboring undulations might have stumbled, in this light, into large, partially filled-in and weed-grown cavities, their banks channelled and beginning to spread into badlands. These pits were such as might have been made by falling meteors, but they were not. They were the scars of gigantic bombs, their rawness already made a little natural by rain, seed, and time. Along the road, there were rakish remnants of fence. There was also, just visible, one portion of tangled and multiple barbed wire still erect, behind which was a shelving ditch with small caves, now very quiet and empty, at intervals in its back wall. Otherwise there was no structure or remnant of a structure visible over the dome of the darkling earth, but only, in sheltered hollows, the darker shadows of young trees trying again.

Under the wuthering arch of the high wind a V of wild geese fled south. The rush of their pinions sounded briefly, and the faint, plaintive notes of their expeditionary talk. Then they left a still greater vacancy. There was the smell and expectation of snow, as there is likely to be when the wild geese fly south. From the remote distance, towards the red sky, came faintly the protracted howl and quick yap-yap of a prairie wolf.

North of the road, perhaps a hundred yards, lay the parallel and deeply intrenched course of a small creek, lined with leafless alders and willows. The creek was already silent under ice. Into the bank above it was dug a sort of cell, with a single opening, like the mouth of a mine tunnel. Within the cell there was a little red of fire, which showed dully through the opening, like a reflection or a deception of the imagination. The light came from the chary burning of four blocks of poorly aged peat, which gave off a petty warmth and much acrid smoke. But the precious remnants of wood, old fence posts and timbers from the long-deserted dugouts, had to be saved for the real cold, for the time when a man's breath blew white, the moisture in his nostrils stiffened at once when he stepped out, and the expansive blizzards paraded for days over the vast open, swirling and settling and thickening, till the dawn of the cleared day when the sky was thin blue-green and the terrible cold, in which a man could not live for three hours unwarmed, lay over the uniformly drifted swell of the plain.

Around the smoldering peat, four men were seated cross-legged. Behind them, traversed by their shadows, was the earth bench, with two old and dirty army blankets, where the owner of the cell slept. In a niche in the opposite wall were a few tin utensils which caught the glint of the coals. The host was rewrapping in a piece of daubed burlap four fine, leather-bound books.

He worked slowly and very carefully, and at last tied the bundle securely with a piece of grass-woven cord. The other three looked intently upon the process, as if a great significance lay in it. As the host tied the cord, he spoke. He was an old man, his long, matted beard and hair gray to nearly white. The shadows made his brows and cheekbones appear gnarled, his eyes and cheeks deeply sunken. His big hands, rough with frost and swollen by rheumatism, were awkward but gentle at their task. He was like a prehistoric priest performing a fateful ceremonial rite. Also his voice had in it a suitable quality of deep, reverent despair, yet perhaps at the moment, a sharpness of selfish satisfaction.

"When I perceived what was happening," he said, "I told myself, 'It is the end. I cannot take much; I will take these.'"

"Perhaps I was impractical," he continued. "But for myself, I do not regret, and what do we know of those who will come after us? We are the doddering remnant of a race of mechanical fools. I have saved what I love; the soul of what was good in us is here; perhaps the new ones will make a strong enough beginning not to fall behind when they become clever."

He rose with slow pain and placed the wrapped volumes in the niche with his utensils. The others watched him with the same ritualistic gaze.

"Shakespeare, the Bible, *Moby Dick*, the *Divine Comedy*," one of them said softly. "You might have done worse, much worse."

"You will have a little soul left until you die," said another harshly. "That is more than is true of us. My brain becomes thick, like my hands." He held the big, battered hands, with their black nails, in the glow to be seen.

"I want paper to write on," he said. "And there is none."

The fourth man said nothing. He sat in the shadow farthest from the fire, and sometimes his body jerked in its rags from the cold. Although he was still young, he was sick and coughed often. Writing implied a greater future than he now felt able to consider.

The old man seated himself laboriously, and reached out, groaning at the movement, to put another block of peat on the fire. With bowed heads and averted eyes, his three guests acknowledged his magnanimity.

"We thank you, Doctor Jenkins, for the reading," said the man who had named the books.

They seemed then to be waiting for something. Doctor Jenkins understood, but was loath to comply. In an ordinary moment he would have said nothing. But the words of *The Tempest*, which he had been reading, and the religious attention of the three made this an unusual occasion.

"You wish to hear the phonograph," he said grudgingly.

The two middle-aged men stared into the fire, unable to formulate and expose the enormity of their desire.

The young man, however, said anxiously, between suppressed coughs, "Oh, please," like an excited child.

The old man rose again in his difficult way, and went to the back of the

cell. He returned and placed tenderly upon the packed floor, where the fire-light might fall upon it, an old portable phonograph in a black case. He smoothed the top with his hand, and then opened it. The lovely green-felt-covered disk became visible.

"I have been using thorns as needles," he said. "But tonight, because we have a musician among us"—he bent his head to the young man, almost invisible in the shadow—"I will use a steel needle. There are only three left."

The two middle-aged men stared at him in speechless adoration. The one with the big hands, who wanted to write, moved his lips, but the whisper was not audible.

"Oh, don't!" cried the young man, as if he were hurt. "The thorns will do beautifully."

"No," the old man said. "I have become accustomed to the thorns, but they are not really good. For you, my young friend, we will have good music tonight."

"After all," he added generously, and beginning to wind the phonograph, which creaked, "they can't last forever."

"No, nor we," the man who needed to write said harshly. "The needle, by all means."

"Oh, thanks," said the young man. "Thanks," he said again in a low, excited voice, and then stifled his coughing with a bowed head.

"The records, though," said the old man when he had finished winding, "are a different matter. Already they are very worn. I do not play them more than once a week. One, once a week, that is what I allow myself."

"More than a week I cannot stand it; not to hear them," he apologized.

"No, how could you?" cried the young man. "And with them here like this."

"A man can stand anything," said the man who wanted to write, in his harsh, antagonistic voice.

"Please, the music," said the young man.

"Only the one," said the old man. "In the long run, we will remember more that way."

He had a dozen records with luxuriant gold and red seals. Even in that light the others could see that the threads of the records were becoming worn. Slowly he read out the titles and the tremendous, dead names of the composers and the artists and the orchestras. The three worked upon the names in their minds, carefully. It was difficult to select from such a wealth what they would at once most like to remember. Finally, the man who wanted to write named Gershwin's "New York."

"Oh, no," cried the sick young man, and then could say nothing more because he had to cough. The others understood him, and the harsh man withdrew his selection and waited for the musician to choose.

The musician begged Doctor Jenkins to read the titles again, very slowly, so that he could remember the sounds. While they were read, he lay back

against the wall, his eyes closed, his thin, horny hand pulling at his light beard, and listened to the voices and the orchestras and the single instruments in his mind.

When the reading was done he spoke despairingly. "I have forgotten," he complained; "I cannot hear them clearly.

"There are things missing," he explained.

"I know," said Doctor Jenkins. "I thought that I knew all of Shelley by heart. I should have brought Shelley."

"That's more soul than we can use," said the harsh man. "*Moby Dick* is better.

"By God, we can understand that," he emphasized.

The Doctor nodded.

"Still," said the man who had admired the books, "we need the absolute if we are to keep a grasp on anything.

"Anything but these sticks and peat clods and rabbit snares," he said bitterly.

"Shelley desired an ultimate absolute," said the harsh man. "It's too much," he said. "It's no good; no earthly good."

The musician selected a Debussy nocturne. The others considered and approved. They rose to their knees to watch the Doctor prepare for the playing, so that they appeared to be actually in an attitude of worship. The peat glow showed the thinness of their bearded faces, and the deep lines in them, and revealed the condition of their garments. The other two continued to kneel as the old man carefully lowered the needle onto the spinning disk, but the musician suddenly drew back against the wall again, with his knees up, and buried his face in his hands.

At the first notes of the piano the listeners were startled. They stared at each other. Even the musician lifted his head in amazement, but then quickly bowed it again, strainingly, as if he were suffering from a pain he might not be able to endure. They were all listening deeply, without movement. The wet, blue-green notes tinkled forth from the old machine, and were individual, delectable presences in the cell. The individual, delectable presences swept into a sudden tide of unbearably beautiful dissonance, and then continued fully the swelling and ebbing of that tide, the dissonant inpourings, and the resolutions, and the diminishments, and the little, quiet wavelets of interlude lapping between. Every sound was piercing and singularly sweet. In all the men except the musician, there occurred rapid sequences of tragically heightened recollection. He heard nothing but what was there. At the final, whispering disappearance, but moving quietly so that the others would not hear him and look at him, he let his head fall back in agony, as if it were drawn there by the hair, and clenched the fingers of one hand over his teeth. He sat that way while the others were silent, and until they began to breathe again normally. His drawn-up legs were trembling violently.

Quickly Doctor Jenkins lifted the needle off, to save it and not to spoil

the recollection with scraping. When he had stopped the whirling of the sacred disk, he courteously left the phonograph open and by the fire, in sight.

The others, however, understood. The musician rose last, but then abruptly, and went quickly out at the door without saying anything. The others stopped at the door and gave their thanks in low voices. The Doctor nodded magnificently.

"Come again," he invited, "in a week. We will have the 'New York.'"

When the two had gone together, out towards the rimed road, he stood in the entrance, peering and listening. At first, there was only the resonant boom of the wind overhead, and then far over the dome of the dead, dark plain, the wolf cry lamenting. In the rifts of clouds the Doctor saw four stars flying. It impressed the Doctor that one of them had just been obscured by the beginning of a flying cloud at the very moment he heard what he had been listening for, a sound of suppressed coughing. It was not near-by, however. He believed that down against the pale alders he could see the moving shadow.

With nervous hands he lowered the piece of canvas which served as his door, and pegged it at the bottom. Then quickly and quietly, looking at the piece of canvas frequently, he slipped the records into the case, snapped the lid shut, and carried the phonograph to his couch. There, pausing often to stare at the canvas and listen, he dug earth from the wall and disclosed a piece of board. Behind this there was a deep hole in the wall, into which he put the phonograph. After a moment's consideration, he went over and reached down his bundle of books and inserted it also. Then, guardedly, he once more sealed up the hole with the board and the earth. He also changed his blankets, and the grass-stuffed sack which served as a pillow, so that he could lie facing the entrance. After carefully placing two more blocks of peat upon the fire, he stood for a long time watching the stretched canvas, but it seemed to billow naturally with the first gusts of a lowering wind. At last he prayed, and got in under his blankets, and closed his smoke-smarting eyes. On the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe.

## HIS AUTUMN-COLORED FACE

*Jesse Stuart (1938)*

His autumn-colored face and eagle eyes  
Look on toward more darkened hills of space;  
He stands a gaunt man under windy skies.  
His sons have fallen to the softer race  
Of those who fear to till the rugged lands;  
They've taken to clean pages of sweet books  
And fear to blister their soft dainty hands—  
They fear some day they'll have their father's looks.



He now surveys the winter's waves of weeds  
 That lie dark-beaten on the rugged slope; 10  
 He plans to turn them under for soil needs—  
 A better corn-crop is his next year's hope.  
 His far-off eagle eyes survey his dreams  
 When snows cap high hills and the world is dead  
 And ice has spanned the little mountain streams, 15  
 His cattle will have corn, his family, bread.

# NONSENSE RHYME

*Elinor Wylie (1929)*

Whatever's good or bad or both	Salt of pure and pepper of vile
Is surely better than the none;	Must season the extremest heart.
There's grace in either love or loathe;	
Sunlight, or freckles on the sun.	
	A pinch of fair, a pinch of foul.
	And bad and good make best of all;
The worst and best are both inclined 5	Beware the moderated soul 15
To snap like vixens at the truth;	That climbs no fractional inch to fall.
But, O, beware the middle mind	
That purrs and never shows a tooth!	Reason's a rabbit in a hutch,
	And ecstasy's a were-wolf ghost;
	But, O, beware the nothing-much
Beware the smooth ambiguous smile	And welcome madness and the 20
That never pulls the lips apart; 10	most!

# A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

*William Butler Yeats (1921)*

Once more the storm is howling, and	I have walked and prayed for this
half hid	young child an hour
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid	And heard the sea-wind scream upon
My child sleeps on. There is no ob-	the tower, 10
stacle	And under the arches of the bridge,
But Gregory's wood and one bare	and scream
hill	In the elms above the flooded stream;
Whereby the haystack- and roof-	Imagining in excited reverie
levelling wind, 5	That the future years had come,
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;	Dancing to a frenzied drum, 15
And for an hour I have walked and	Out of the murderous innocence of
prayed	the sea.
Because of the great gloom that is in	
my mind.	

May she be granted beauty and yet  
 not  
 Beauty to make a stranger's eye dis-  
 traught,  
 Or hers before a looking-glass, for  
 such, 20  
 Being made beautiful overmuch,  
 Consider beauty a sufficient end,  
 Lose natural kindness and maybe  
 The heart-revealing intimacy  
 That chooses right, and never find a  
 friend.

Helen, being chosen, found life flat  
 and dull, 25  
 And later had much trouble from a  
 fool,  
 While that great Queen, that rose out  
 of the spray,  
 Being fatherless, could have her way  
 Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for  
 man.  
 It's certain that fine women eat 30  
 A crazy salad with their meat  
 Whereby the Horn of Plenty is un-  
 done.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly  
 learned;  
 Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts  
 are earned  
 By those that are not entirely beau-  
 tiful; 35  
 Yet many, that have played the fool  
 For beauty's very self, has charm  
 made wise,  
 And many a poor man that has roved,  
 Loved and thought himself beloved,  
 From a glad kindness cannot take his  
 eyes. 40

May she become a flourishing hidden  
 tree  
 That all her thoughts may like the  
 linnet be,  
 And have no business but dispensing  
 round  
 Their magnanimities of sound.

Nor but in merriment begin a chase,  
 Nor but in merriment a quarrel. 46  
 O may she live like some green laurel  
 Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I  
 have loved,  
 The sort of beauty that I have ap-  
 proved, 50  
 Prosper but little, has dried up of  
 late,  
 Yet knows that to be choked with  
 hate  
 May well be of all evil chances chief.  
 If there's no hatred in a mind  
 Assault and battery of the wind 55  
 Can never tear the linnet from the  
 leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,  
 So let her think opinions are accursed.  
 Have I not seen the loveliest woman  
 born  
 Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn, 60  
 Because of her opinionated mind  
 Barter that horn and every good  
 By quiet natures understood  
 For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven  
 hence, 65  
 The soul recovers radical innocence  
 And learns at last that it is self-  
 delighting,  
 Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,  
 And that its own sweet will is Heav-  
 en's will;  
 She can, though every face should  
 scowl 70  
 And every windy quarter howl  
 Or every bellows burst, be happy  
 still.

And may her bridegroom bring her  
 to a house  
 Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;  
 For arrogance and hatred are the  
 wares 75

Peddled in the thoroughfares.  
How but in custom and in ceremony  
Are innocence and beauty born?

Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,  
And custom for the spreading laurel  
tree. 80

## FLAMMONDE

*Edwin Arlington Robinson (1916)*

The man Flammonde, from God  
knows where,  
With firm address and foreign air,  
With news of nations in his talk  
And something royal in his walk,  
With glint of iron in his eyes, 5  
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,  
Appeared, and stayed, and held his  
head

As one of kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose  
About him, and about his clothes, 10  
He pictured all tradition hears  
Of what we owe to fifty years.  
His cleansing heritage of taste  
Paraded neither want nor waste;  
And what he needed for his fee 15  
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,  
Or what mischance, or other cause,  
Had banished him from better days  
To play the Prince of Castaways. 20  
Meanwhile he played surpassing well  
A part, for most, unplayable;  
In fine, one pauses, half afraid  
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego 25  
Conviction as to yes or no;  
Nor can I say just how intense  
Would then have been the difference  
To several, who, having striven  
In vain to get what he was given, 30  
Would see the stranger taken on  
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent  
He soothed and found munificent;

His courtesy beguiled and foiled 35  
Suspicion that his years were soiled;  
His mien distinguished any crowd,  
His credit strengthened when he  
bowed;  
And women, young and old, were  
fond  
Of looking at the man Flammonde. 40

There was a woman in our town  
On whom the fashion was to frown;  
But while our talk renewed the tinge  
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,  
The man Flammonde saw none of  
that, 45  
And what he saw we wondered at—  
That none of us, in her distress,  
Could hide or find our littleness. 15

There was a boy that all agreed  
Had shut within him the rare seed 50  
Of learning. We could understand,  
But none of us could lift a hand.  
The man Flammonde appraised the  
youth,  
And told a few of us the truth;  
And thereby, for a little gold, 55  
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought  
For years and years, and over nought;  
They made life awkward for their  
friends,  
And shortened their own dividends.  
The man Flammonde said what was  
wrong 61  
Should be made right; nor was it long  
Before they were again in line,  
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four	65	How much it was of him we met
Of many out of many more.		We cannot ever know; nor yet
So much for them. But what of him—		Shall all he gave us quite atone
So firm in every look and limb?		For what was his, and his alone;
What small satanic sort of kink		Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Was in his brain? What broken link		Nourish an ethical unrest—
Withheld him from the destinies	71	Rarely at once will nature give
That came so near to being his?		The power to be Flammonde and live.

  

What was he, when we came to sift		We cannot know how much we learn
His meaning, and to note the drift		From those who never will return,
Of incommunicable ways,	75	Until a flash of unforeseen
That make us ponder while we praise?		Remembrance falls on what has been.
Why was it that his charm revealed		We've each a darkening hill to climb;
Somehow the surface of a shield?		And this is why, from time to time
What was it that we never caught?		In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
What was he, and what was he not?	80	Horizons for the man Flammonde.

## RESOLVE

*William Ellery Leonard (1928)*

There is an end. The fever and the pain,  
 The craving unto life with that far hope  
 Of mornings and of twilights, seen by two,  
 Shall torture me no more. The nightly stars  
 Beam downward and the sun and moon arise 5  
 And pass o'er earth with all its snows and grass  
 And towers and scattered graves, and seeds are blown  
 And pestilence with winds, and there be tears  
 For sorrow, smiles for joy. The Eternal Law  
 Works in all regions, bringing light and dark. 10  
 It works in me. It makes in me an end  
 Even of the woe which it before had wrought,  
 And leads me to the springs beyond the mount,  
 Beyond all populous cities, where each man  
 Must flee when all is lost, and in myself 15  
 I find at last the rod which strikes the rocks  
 Of living waters.

I have garnered long

O'er many lands, in many books. I own  
 Old trees and castles, cataracts and heights, 20  
 And orient cities, dusk along the Nile,  
 Old fountains, marbles, pictures, red and gold,  
 From blue Valdarno, and old meters too,  
 From Scio, Delphi, Mantua down the South,

From northern Weimar and the Avon stream, 25  
 And folksongs of the Alp and Apennine  
 And German rivers. Lo, I own the dream  
 Of Plato and the hardiness of Kant.  
 I have all wealth within me; I will look.

And I have that within me which shall build 30  
 Even from the fragments of dead hopes a house  
 Where I may dwell as I grow more a god.

### BE STILL, MY SOUL

(From The Shropshire Lad)

A. E. Housman (1896)

Be still, my soul, be still; the arms you bear are brittle,  
 Earth and high heaven are fixed of old and founded strong.  
 Think rather—call to thought, if now you grieve a little,  
 The days when we had rest, O soul, for they were long.

Men loved unkindness then, but lightness in the quarry 5  
 I slept and saw not; tears fell down, I did not mourn;  
 Sweat ran and blood sprang out and I was never sorry.  
 Then it was well with me, in days ere I was born.

Now, and I muse for why and never find the reason,  
 I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun. 10  
 Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season;  
 Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.

Aye, look—high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation;  
 All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain:  
 Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation— 15  
 Oh, why did I awake? when shall I sleep again?

### LAUGH AND BE MERRY

John Masefield (1910)

Laugh and be merry; remember, better the world with a song,  
 Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.  
 Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span,  
 Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry; remember, in olden time, 5  
 God made heaven and earth, for joy He took in a rime,  
 Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of His mirth,  
 The splendid joy of the stars, the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky,  
 Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by, 10  
 Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured  
 In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,  
 Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,  
 Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends. 15  
 Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends.

### MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS

*Sir Edward Dyer (1588)*

My mind to me a kingdom is;	Some have too much, yet still do
Such present joys therein I find	crave; 25
That it excels all other bliss	I little have, and seek no more.
That earth affords or grows by kind.	They are but poor, though much
Though much I want which most	they have,
would have, 5	And I am rich with little store.
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.	They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
	They lack, I leave; they pine, I live. 30

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,	I laugh not at another's loss;
No force to win the victory,	I grudge not at another's pain;
No wily wit to salve a sore,	No worldly waves my mind can toss;
No shape to feed a loving eye; 10	My state at one doth still remain.
To none of these I yield as thrall—	I fear no foe, I fawn no friend; 35
For why? My mind doth serve for	I loathe not life, nor dread my end.
all.	

I see how plenty surfeits oft,	Some weigh their pleasure by their
And hasty climbers soon do fall;	lust,
I see that those which are aloft 15	Their wisdom by their rage of will;
Mishap doth threaten most of all;	Their treasure is their only trust;
They get with toil, they keep with	A cloakèd craft their store of skill.
fear—	But all the pleasure that I find 41
Such cares my mind could never bear.	Is to maintain a quiet mind.

Content to live, this is my stay;	My wealth is health and perfect ease;
I seek no more than may suffice; 20	My conscience clear my chief de-
I press to bear no haughty sway;	fense;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies.	I neither seek by bribes to please, 45
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,	Nor by deceit to breed offense.
Content with that my mind doth	Thus do I live; thus will I die;
bring.	Would all did so as well as I!



In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
 Born but to die, and reasoning but to err; 10  
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
 Whether he thinks too little or too much:  
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;  
 Still by himself abused or disabused;  
 Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15  
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:  
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!  
 Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,  
 Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20  
 Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,  
 Correct old Time, and regulate the sun;  
 Go, soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,  
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;  
 Or tread the mazy round his followers trod, 25  
 And quitting sense call imitating God;  
 As Eastern priests in giddy circles run,  
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.  
 Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—  
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool! 30

## ULYSSES

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1842)*

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
 Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. 5  
 I cannot rest from travel; I will drink  
 Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed  
 Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
 Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10  
 Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known,—cities of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honored of them all,— 15  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Tröy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
 Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades 20  
 For ever and for ever when I move.



How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!  
 As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me 25  
 Little remains; but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.  
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the scepter and the isle,—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and through soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.  
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;  
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners, 45  
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me,—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;  
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50  
 Death closes all; but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;  
 The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep 55  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;  
 It may be that we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. 65  
 Though much is taken, much abides; and though  
 We are not now that strength which in old days  
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will 70  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

# TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

*Robert Herrick (1648)*

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,  
Old time is still a flying,  
And this same flower that smiles to-  
day,  
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of Heaven, the  
sun,  
The higher he's a getting,  
The sooner will his race be run,  
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,  
When youth and blood are  
warmer;  
But being spent, the worse, and worst  
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And while ye may, go marry;  
For having lost but once your prime  
You may for ever tarry.

## RABBI BEN EZRA

*Robert Browning (1864)*

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first  
was made:

Our times are in His hand  
Who saith "A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half; trust God: see  
all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,  
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,  
Which lily leave and then as best re-  
call?"

Not that, admiring stars,  
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;  
Mine be some figured flame which  
blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears,  
Annulling youth's brief years,  
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the  
mark!

Rather I prize the doubt  
Low kinds exist without,  
Finished and finite clods, untroubled  
by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
Were man but formed to feed  
On joy, to solely seek and find and  
feast:

Such feasting ended, then  
As sure an end to men;  
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets  
doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied  
To That which doth provide  
And not partake, effect and not re-  
ceive!

A spark disturbs our clod;  
Nearer we hold of God  
Who gives, than of His tribes that  
take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand  
but go!

Be our joys three-parts pain!  
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare,  
never grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox  
Which comforts while it mocks,—  
Shall life succeed in that it seems to  
fail:

What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me:  
A brute I might have been, but would  
not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute  
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,  
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs  
want play?

To man, propose this test—  
Thy body at its best,  
How far can that project thy soul on  
its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:  
I own the Past profuse 50  
Of power each side, perfection every  
turn:

Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
Brain treasured up the whole;  
Should not the heart beat once "How  
good to live and learn?"

Not once beat "Praise be Thine! 55  
I see the whole design,  
I, who saw Power, see now Love per-  
fect too:

Perfect I call Thy plan:  
Thanks that I was a man!  
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust  
what Thou shalt do!" 60

For pleasant is this flesh;  
Our soul in its rose-mesh  
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns  
for rest:

Would we some prize might hold  
To match those manifold 65  
Possessions of the brute,—gain most,  
as we did best!

Let us not always say,  
"Spite of this flesh today  
I strove, made head, gained ground  
upon the whole!"

As the bird wings and sings, 70  
Let us cry, "All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more,  
now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age  
To grant youth's heritage,  
Life's struggle having so far reached  
its term: 75

Thence shall I pass, approved  
A man, for aye removed  
From the developed brute; a God  
though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon  
Take rest, ere I be gone 80  
Once more on my adventure brave  
and new:

Fearless and unperplexed,  
When I wage battle next,  
What weapons to select, what armour  
to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try 85  
My gain or loss thereby;  
Be the fire ashes, what survives is  
gold:

And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame:  
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall  
know, being old. 90

For note, when evening shuts,  
A certain moment cuts  
The deed off, calls the glory from the  
grey:

A whisper from the west  
Shoots—"Add this to the rest, 95  
Take it and try its worth: here dies  
another day."

So, still within this life,  
Though lifted o'er its strife,  
Let me discern, compare, pronounce  
at last,

"This rage was right i' the main, 100  
That acquiescence vain:  
The Future I may face now I have  
proved the Past."

For more is not reserved  
To man, with soul just nerved  
To act to-morrow what he learns to-  
day: 105

Here, work enough to watch  
The Master work, and catch  
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of  
the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth  
Should strive, through acts uncouth.  
Toward making, than repose on  
aught found made; 111

So, better, age, exempt  
From strife, should know, than tempt  
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait  
death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right 115  
And Good and Infinite  
Be named here, as thou callest thy  
hand thine own,  
With knowledge absolute,  
Subject to no dispute  
From fools that crowded youth, nor  
let thee feel alone. 120

• Be there, for once and all,  
Severed great minds from small,  
Announced to each his station in the  
Past!  
Was I, the world arraigned,  
Were they, my soul disdained, 125  
Right? Let age speak the truth and  
give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?  
Ten men love what I hate,  
Shun what I follow, slight what I  
receive;  
Ten, who in ears and eyes 130  
Match me: we all surmise,  
They, this thing, and I, that: whom  
shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass  
Called "work" must sentence pass,  
Things done, that took the eye and  
had the price; 135  
O'er which, from level stand,  
The low world laid its hand,  
Found straightway to its mind, could  
value in a trice:

But all the world's coarse thumb  
And finger failed to plumb, 140  
So passed in making up the main ac-  
count;  
All instincts immature,  
All purposes unsure,  
That weighed not as his work, yet  
swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed 145  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language  
and escaped;  
All I could never be,  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose  
wheel the pitcher shaped. 150

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
That metaphor! and feel  
Why time spins fast, why passive lies  
our clay,—  
Thou, to whom fools propound,  
When the wine makes its round, 155  
"Since life fleets, all is change; the  
Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God  
stand sure:  
What entered into thee, 160  
That was, is, and shall be:  
Time's wheel runs back or stops;  
Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst  
fain arrest: 165  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee and turn thee forth, suffi-  
ciently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves  
Which ran the laughing loves 170  
Around thy base no longer pause and  
press?  
What though, about thy rim,  
Skull-things in order grim  
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the  
sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!	175	Did I,—to the wheel of life	
To uses of a cup,		With shapes and colours rife,	185
The festal board, lamp's flash and		Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to	
trumpet's peal,		slake Thy thirst:	
The new wine's foaming flow,			
The Master's lips aglow!		So, take and use Thy work!	
Thou, heaven's consummate cup,		Amend what flaws may lurk,	
what needest thou with earth's		What strain o' the stuff, what warp-	
wheel?	180	ings past the aim!	
		My times be in Thy hand!	190
But I need, now as then,		Perfect the cup as planned!	
Thee, God, who moulded men;		Let age approve of youth, and death	
And since, not even while the whirl		complete the same!	
was worst,			

## CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

*William Wordsworth (1807)*

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he  
 That every man in arms should wish to be?  
 —It is the generous spirit, who, when brought  
 Among the task of real life, hath wrought  
 Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought; 5  
 Whose high endeavors are an inward light  
 That makes the path before him always bright;  
 Who, with a natural instinct to discern  
 What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;  
 Abides by this resolve, and stops not there, 10  
 But makes his moral being his prime care;  
 Who, doomed to go in company with pain  
 And fear and bloodshed, miserable train!  
 Turns his necessity to glorious gain;  
 In face of these doth exercise a power. 15  
 Which is our human nature's highest dower;  
 Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves  
 Of their bad influence, and their good receives;  
 By objects, which might force the soul to abate  
 Her feeling, rendered more compassionate; 20  
 Is placable—because occasions rise  
 So often that demand such sacrifice;  
 More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,  
 As tempted more; more able to endure,  
 As more exposed to suffering and distress; 25  
 Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.  
 —'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends  
 Upon that law as on the best of friends;

Whence, in a state where men are tempted still  
 To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30  
 And what in quality or act is best  
 Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,  
 He labors good on good to fix, and owes  
 To virtue every triumph that he knows;  
 —Who, if he rise to station of command, 35  
 Rises by open means; and there will stand  
 On honorable terms, or else retire,  
 And in himself possess his own desire;  
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
 Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim; 40  
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait  
 For wealth or honors or for worldly state;  
 Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,  
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all;  
 Whose powers shed round him in the common strife, 45  
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,  
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;  
 But who, if he be called upon to face  
 Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined  
 Great issues, good or bad for human kind, 50  
 Is happy as a lover; and attired  
 With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;  
 And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law  
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;  
 Or if an unexpected call succeed, 55  
 Come when it will, is equal to the need.  
 —He who, though thus endued as with a sense  
 And faculty for storm and turbulence,  
 Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans  
 To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes; 60  
 Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,  
 Are at his heart; and such fidelity  
 It is his darling passion to approve;  
 More brave for this, that he hath much to love.  
 'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high, 65  
 Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,  
 Or left unthought-of in obscurity—  
 Who, with a toward or untoward lot,  
 Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—  
 Plays, in the many games of life, that one 70  
 Where what he most doth value must be won;  
 Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,  
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray;  
 Who, not content that former worth stand fast,  
 Looks forward, persevering to the last, 75  
 From well to better, daily self-surpassed;

Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth  
 Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,  
 Or he must fall to sleep without his fame,  
 And leave a dead, unprofitable name— 80  
 Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;  
 And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws  
 His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause—  
 This is the happy Warrior; this is he  
 That every man in arms should wish to be. 85

## LONDON, 1802

*William Wordsworth (1802)*

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour;	And give us manners, virtue, free- dom, power.
England hath need of thee. She is a fen	Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen	Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea. 10
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,	Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5	So didst thou travel on life's common way,
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;	In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
Oh! raise us up, return to us again,	The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

## TO CYRIACK SKINNER

*John Milton (1655)*

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear	Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,	Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
Bereft of light, their seeing have for- got;	The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied 10
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight ap- pear	In liberty's defense, my noble task, Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
Of sun or moon or star throughout the year, 5	This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot	Content, though blind, had I no bet- ter guide.

## ON HIS BLINDNESS

*John Milton (1655)*

When I consider how my light is  
 spent  
 Ere half my days in this dark world  
 and wide,  
 And that one talent which is death  
 to hide  
 Lodged with me useless, though  
 my soul more bent  
 To serve therewith my Maker, and  
 present<sup>5</sup>  
 My true account, lest He, return-  
 ing, chide,  
 "Doth God exact day-labor, light  
 denied?"  
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to pre-  
 vent  
 That murmur, soon replies, "God  
 doth not need  
 Either man's work or his own gifts.  
 Who best<sup>10</sup>  
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him  
 best. His state  
 Is kingly: thousands at his bidding  
 speed,  
 And post o'er land and ocean with-  
 out rest;  
 They also serve who only stand and  
 wait."

## DOVER BEACH

*Matthew Arnold (1867)*

The sea is calm to-night.  
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
 Upon the straits;—on the French  
 coast the light  
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of Eng-  
 land stand,  
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tran-  
 quil bay.<sup>5</sup>  
 Come to the window, sweet is the  
 night-air!  
 Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-  
 blanch'd land  
 Listen! you hear the grating roar  
 Of pebbles which the waves draw  
 back, and fling<sup>10</sup>  
 At their return, up the high stand,  
 Begin, and cease, and then again be-  
 gin,  
 With tremulous cadence slow, and  
 bring  
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago<sup>15</sup>  
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it  
 brought  
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
 Of human misery; we  
 Find also in the sound a thought,  
 Hearing it by this distant northern  
 sea.<sup>20</sup>  
 The sea of faith  
 Was once, too, at the full, and round  
 earth's shore  
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle  
 furl'd.  
 But now I only hear  
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing  
 roar,<sup>25</sup>  
 Retreating to the breath  
 Of the night-wind down the vast  
 edges drear  
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
 To one another! for the world, which  
 seems<sup>30</sup>  
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
 So various, so beautiful, so new,  
 Hath really neither joy, nor love,  
 nor light,  
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help  
 for pain;  
 And we are here as on a darkling  
 plain<sup>35</sup>  
 Swept with confused alarms of strug-  
 gle and flight.  
 Where ignorant armies clash by  
 night.



## "DOVER BEACH"—A NOTE TO THAT POEM

*Archibald MacLeish (1936)*

The wave withdrawing  
Withers with seaward rustle of flimsy water  
Sucking the sand down: dragging at empty shells:  
The roil after it settling: too smooth: smothered . . .

After forty a man's a fool to wait in the 5  
Sea's face for the full force and the roaring of  
Surf to come over him: droves of careening water.  
After forty the tug's out and the salt and the  
Sea follow it: less sound and violence:  
Nevertheless the ebb has its own beauty— 10  
Shells sand and all the whispering rustle.  
There's earth in it then and the bubbles of foam gone.

Moreover—and this too has its lovely uses—  
It's the outward wave that spills the inward forward  
Tripping the proud pile mute virginal 15  
Mountain of water in wallowing welter of light and  
Sound enough—thunder for miles back: it's a fine and a  
Wild smother to vanish in: pulling down—  
Tripping with outward ebb the urgent inward.

Speaking alone for myself it's the steep hill and the 20  
Toppling lift of the young men I am toward now—  
Waiting for that as the wave for the next wave.  
Let them go over us all I say with the thunder of  
What's to be next in the world. It's we will be under it!

## SPEECH TO THE DETRACTORS

*Archibald MacLeish (1936)*

What should a man do but love excellence  
Whether of earth or art  
Whether the hare's leap or the heart's recklessness?

What honor has any man but with eagerness 5  
Valuing wasteless things  
To praise the great and speak the unpraise meagerly?

Because the heroes with the swords have vanished  
Leaving us nearer by  
Actual life and the more human manhood—

Because the common face: the anonymous figure: 10  
The nameless and mortal man:  
Is our time's birth to bear and to be big with—

Because the captains and the kings are dust—  
Need we deny our hearts  
Their natural duty and the thing they *must* do? 15

Not to the wearers of wreaths but those who bring them  
Coming with heaped-up arms  
Is fame the noble and ennobling thing.

Bequeathers of praise the unnamed numberless peoples  
Leave on the lasting earth 20  
Not fame but their hearts' love of fame for keeping.

They raise not alone memorial monuments:  
Outlasting these  
They raise their need to render greatness honor.

The ignorant and rabble rain crases 25  
Dates and the dead man's kind.  
It leaves the blindness of the stones that praised him.

Why then must this time of ours be envious?  
Why must the great man now—  
Sealed from the mouths of worms—be sucked by men's mouths? 30

Refusing ribbons that the rest have clowned for—  
Dying and wishing peace—  
The best are eaten by the envy round them.

When Lawrence died the hate was at his bier.  
Fearing there might have lived 35  
A man really noble; really superior—

Fearing that worth had lived and had been modest—  
Men of envious minds  
Ate with venom his new buried body.

We cheat ourselves in cheating worth of wonder. 40  
Not the unwitting dead  
But we who leave the praise unsaid are plundered.

## SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

*Walt Whitman* (1855)

## I

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good-fortune;  
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing. 5  
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

The earth—that is sufficient;  
I do not want the constellations any nearer;  
I know they are very well where they are;  
I know they suffice for those who belong to them. . . . 10

## II

You road I enter upon and look around! I believe you are not all that is here;  
I believe that much unseen is also here. . . .

## III

You air that serves me with breath to speak!  
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings, and give them shape!  
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable showers! 15  
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides!  
I think you are latent with unseen existences—you are so dear to me.

You flagg'd walks of the cities! you strong curbs at the edges!  
You ferries! you planks and posts of wharves! you timber-lined sides! you  
distant ships!  
You rows of houses! you window-pierc'd facades! you roofs! . . . 20

From all that has been near you, I believe you have imparted to yourselves,  
and now would impart the same secretly to me;  
From the living and the dead I think you have peopled your impassive sur-  
faces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

## V

From this hour freedom!  
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,  
Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute, 25  
Listening to others, and considering well what they say,  
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,  
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would  
hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space;  
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine . . . 30

## VI

. . . Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,  
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth. . . .

## IX

Allons! whoever you are, come travel with me!  
Traveling with me, you find what never tires.

The earth never tires; 35  
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first—Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first;  
Be not discouraged—keep on—there are divine things, well envelop'd;  
I swear to you there are divine things, more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here!  
However sweet these laid-up stores—however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here; 40  
However shelter'd this port, and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here;  
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

## XI

Listen! I will be honest with you;  
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes:  
These are the days that must happen to you: 45

You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,  
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,  
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd—you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,  
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you;  
What beckonings of love you receive, you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting, 50  
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.

## XII

Allons! after the GREAT COMPANIONS! and to belong to them!  
They too are on the road! they are the swift and majestic men! they are the greatest women. . . .

## XIV

The Soul travels;  
The body does not travel as much as the soul;  
The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts away at last for the 55  
journeys of the soul.  
All parts away for the progress of souls;  
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments,—all that was or is apparent  
upon this globe or any globe, falls into riches and corners before the  
procession of Souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the  
universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance. . . .

## XV

Allons! whoever you are! come forth! 60  
You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house, though you built  
it, or though it has been built for you.

Allons! out of the dark confinement!  
It is useless to protest—I know all, and expose it.

Behold, through you as bad as the rest,  
Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of people, 65  
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd and trimm'd faces,  
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair. . . .

## XVII

Allons! the road is before us!  
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well:

Allons! be not detain'd! 70  
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the book on the shelf  
unopen'd!  
Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money remain unearn'd!  
Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the teacher!  
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer plead in the court, and  
the judge expound the law.

Mon enfant! I give you my hand! 75  
I give you my love, more precious than money,  
I give you myself, before preaching or law;  
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?  
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

## TO YOU, ENDLESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

## AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

*M. M. Flood (1945)**SCENE: A Hill-top, a tree, and North, East, South, and West, America.**Enter: A sturdy old man with a white beard, who is certainly Walt Whitman and, from the opposite direction, a young man with large and beautiful eyes who might be William Saroyan. They speak only in words taken from their books.*

WHITMAN. Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me?

And why should I not speak to you?

Whoever you are. To you, endless announcements.

SAROYAN. One way or another will be all right with me, only let each side speak out honestly.

WHITMAN. I wear my hat as I please indoors and out. Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son.

SAROYAN. I am of Frisco, the fog, the foghorns, the ocean, the hills, the sand dunes, the melancholy of the place, my beloved city.

WHITMAN. I will salute courteously every city large and small.

I sing not with reference to a day, but with reference to all days.

SAROYAN. I talk about Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Monday January February March April May June July August September October November December January everywhere.

WHITMAN. Behold this swarthy face, these gray eyes,  
This beard, the white wool unclipt upon my neck,  
My brown hands and the silent manner of me.

SAROYAN. This is no world in which to be quiet. It is essential for me to stick pins in pompous balloons.

WHITMAN. Whoever you are, how can

I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be eligible as I am?

We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.

Sit awhile dear son,

Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink.

SAROYAN. I am a story-teller, and I have but a single story—man.

WHITMAN. I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes.  
I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,

Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspapers, schools, real estate and personal estate.

SAROYAN. This is your world and it is my world, and it is not real estate, and not nations, and not governments; it is this accidental place of mortality; it is this pause in time and space. It is this chance to breathe, to walk, to see, to eat, to sleep, to love, to laugh. It belongs to this mangled  
like this still unborn God man

WHITMAN. There is something that comes to me now and perpetually,  
It is not what is printed, preach'd, discussed, it eludes discussion and print.  
It is for you whoever you are.

SAROYAN. I believe in everything, I have all the faith in the world, in the  
undernourished and overworked, the weary and diseased and haunted.  
I think they can be fed, rested, healed, made whole again.

WHITMAN. Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,  
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman; sailor, quaker. . . .  
Through me many long dumb voices,  
Voices of the diseas'd and despairing. . . .  
This is the meal equally set, this is the meat for natural hunger,  
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous,  
I make appointments with all.

I speak the pass word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,  
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have on the same terms.

SAROYAN. I want to speak a more universal language. The heart of man, the  
unwritten part of man, that which is eternal and common to all races.

WHITMAN. Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will mine and let us hasten  
forth,

Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

. . . Are you he who would assume a place to teach or be a poet here in  
the states?

Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men?

The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferred till his country  
Absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorb'd it.

SAROYAN. I am trying to restore man to his natural dignity and gentleness.  
I want to restore man to himself. I want to send him from the mob to  
his own body and mind. I want to lift him from the nightmare of  
history to the calm dream of his own soul, the true chronicle of his  
kind.

WHITMAN. For the great Idea,—the idea of perfect and free individuals,

For that, the bard walks in advance, leader of leaders,

The attitude of him cheers slaves and horrifies foreign despots.

Without extinction is Liberty, . . .

They live in the feelings of young men and the best women,

Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth been always ready  
to fall for Liberty.

SAROYAN. This earth, the face of one who lived, the form without the weight,  
weeping upon snow, white music, the magnified flower twice the size  
of the universe, black clouds, the caged panther staring, deathless  
space, Mr. Eliot with rolled sleeves baking bread, Flaubert and Guy de  
Maupassant, a wordless rhyme of early meaning, Finlandia, mathe-  
matics highly polished and slick as a green onion to the teeth, Jeru-  
salem, the path to paradox.

WHITMAN. Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,

I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,

I will make divine magnetic lands,

With the love of comrades,

With the life-long love of comrades.

SAROYAN. O swift moment of life: it is ended, the earth is again new.

WHITMAN. A camerado close! O you and me at last, and us two only.

SAROYAN (*aside*). Now I am beginning to feel guilty and incompetent. I have used all this language and I am beginning to feel that I have said nothing. This is what drives a young writer out of his head, this feeling that nothing is being said.

WHITMAN. Americanos! conquerors! marches humanitarian!

Foremost! century marches! Libertad! masses!

For you a programme of chants.

SAROYAN. Any ordinary journalist would have been able to put the whole business into a three-word caption.

WHITMAN. What do you seek so pensive and silent?

What do you need camerado?

Dear son do you think it is love?

SAROYAN. I see very clearly, and as soon as I earn enough money to buy a saw and a hammer and a piece of lumber I shall do my best to make a simple chair or a shelf for books.

WHITMAN. I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America.

SAROYAN. Good-bye!

(*Exits running.*)

Bibliography: Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, "Starting from Paumanok." Saroyan's "The Trouble with Tigers," *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, *Peace, It's Wonderful*.

## THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

T. S. Eliot (1917)

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,  
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

LET us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table;  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question, . . .  
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"  
Let us go and make our visit.

5

10



In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the windowpanes, 15  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the windowpanes,  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap, 20  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,  
Rubbing its back upon the windowpanes; 25  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands  
That lift and drop a question on your plate; 30  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go 35  
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair— 40  
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—  
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")  
Do I dare 45  
Disturb the universe?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, 50  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.  
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all— 55  
 The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
 And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
 When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
 Then how should I begin  
 To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways? 60  
 And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—  
 Arms that are braced and white and bare  
 (But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)  
 Is it perfume from a dress 65  
 That makes me so digress?  
 Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
 And should I then presume?  
 And how should I begin?

. . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets 70  
 And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
 Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
 Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully! 75  
 Smoothed by long fingers,  
 Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,  
 Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.  
 Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
 Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis? 80  
 But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
 Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,  
 I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;  
 I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,  
 And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker, 85  
 And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
 After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
 Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,  
 Would it have been worth while, 90

To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
 To have squeezed the universe into a ball,  
 To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
 To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—  
If one, settling a pillow by her head, 95  
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;  
That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while, 100  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,  
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—  
And this, and so much more?—  
It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen 105  
Would it have been worth while  
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,  
And turning toward the window, should say:  
"That is not it at all,  
That is not what I meant, at all." 110

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use, 115  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;  
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—  
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old. . . . I grow old. . . . 120  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me. 125

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black. .

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown 130  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

## THE WORLD IN YOUR HAND

*Theodore Spencer (1943)*

## I

I COME to speak first of simple things, 23  
 To make you think of words for simple things;  
 Poetry is usually in the simplest words:  
 Words like hand, milk, earth, sun, cloth,  
 Words and things we see, digest, and feel, 5  
 That make our world, that make love grow in our world,  
 But being simple are so hard to find,  
 As thought of them is hard to find, till danger  
 Wakens our eyes to their conceivable loss  
 And brings us back to them and to ourselves. 10  
 I come to speak first of obvious things;  
 Sunlight, a woman's breast, walking, apples,  
 An ant running efficiently through grass,  
 A leaf in the rain, a drifting mote in sunbeams;  
 I ask you to think of a single strand of hair. 15  
 All wonder, all delight, all love and wisdom  
 Rise from the dust they end with, till we see,  
 Thinking of simple things, our single world's  
 One with the revolution of the stars.

## II

Held in your hand, the round heavy world 20  
 Can weigh your hand down till the globe smashes  
 Hand and globe together. Held in your hand,  
 The world can be tossed up, a bubble, into the air  
 And be dissolved, emptily, to nothing,  
 Leaving an idle hand. Held in your hand, 25  
 The world can weight your hand, strengthen it, fix it,  
 Till you can move your hand with the weight of it,  
 And you, the flexible hand, the world, are one.

## III

The pulse that stirs the mind,  
 The mind that urges bone, 30  
 Move to the same wind  
 That blows over stone.

Over the Arctic pole  
 The same wind blows,  
 And into the waiting soul 35  
 Of him that knows

Whence that wind stirs;  
Blows the wind  
Over the hemispheres  
Of world and mind, 40

Crying: "O not alone,  
Strange creature of air,  
Stands that cold stone,  
Silvers that hair."

Crying: "You are not alone, 45  
Bright angel of dust;  
You are flower and stone,  
Are diamond and rust."

Crying: "Not alone  
Does your heart fade, 50  
Beneath white bone  
To the dark shade."

"Not alone," crying,  
Calls the cold wind.  
And echo, dying, 55  
Sings in the mind.

## IV

We do not remember birth; no one can tell us  
What it is like to die. One third of our lives  
Is spent in sleep. And when we are awake  
We use only a portion of ourselves, 60  
Doing the anxious, necessary things,  
Plowing the heavy earth, mining under  
The dark earth, planning the earth's conquest;  
Plowing, mining, planning, without thought,  
Caught in the wheel that heavily turns our lives, 65  
And heavily turns the earth beneath our lives. . . .

We hope that death will catch us unaware.

## V

We are brought to this damnation, not by God,  
Not by blind evolution of cell to man,  
Not by the grabbing of money by envious thieves; 70  
We are brought to this damnation by ourselves—  
Though God, nature, and money shape our growth—  
Trying always to live out of ourselves,  
Sharing too much, and not sharing enough.

We try to live only in the obvious clamor. 75  
 We are children, cruel children, hating each other;  
 Like children we look for parents justly to punish us,  
 And not finding parents, attack each other,  
 Grabbing each other's toys. We are afraid.

And we are rebuked, poor children, by simple things; 80  
 A stone, the order of petals, a snowflake crystal.  
 We are rebuked, sad children, for our fear  
 When, out of earth, we see in each dead leaf  
 The tender resurrection of the spring.  
 We are rebuked, cruel children, when we wake 85  
 Seeing the sun, bright on an April morning,  
 Broaden his slow splendor over the world.

## VI

And yet these things are not our life, are only  
 Part of our lives, the edges, not the center;  
 Able to shame us only, not to shape us. 90  
 There is no voice except our own to cry  
 In terrible pity over our broken promise.  
 We have no voice but our own to shout "Awake!"  
 Before disaster becomes the air we breathe  
 And the water we drink is muddied with choking ash. 95

What shall arouse us? What trumpet shatter our sleep?  
 Is it always and only the trumpets of war that make us  
 Wake, work, stride, triumph together  
 Until a peace of some sort slackens us again 100  
 And we relax into our usual selves?  
 What can we find to make us live our lives  
 Partly alone and brave; together—and wise;  
 A crowd together, not losing the lonely voice;  
 Men alone, not losing the crowd's voice;  
 What can we find to make us win our peace 105  
 Without this fierce intemperance of war?

## VII

Man's handicap begins  
 At birth or before birth;  
 One grandfather's sins  
 Sent him to early earth, 110  
 And from that now clean bone  
 And futile dust  
 He stirs the grandson on  
 His rhythm of lust,  
 Urging in living cell 115

Ancestral evil,  
And summoning out of hell  
The obliging devil.  
One grandfather's love,  
Now also bone, 120  
Found pure love enough,  
Singing alone;  
And that long-lived old man,  
Thinking of heaven,  
Should have made heaven's plan 125  
Seem fair and even.  
But Jack and you and I,  
Our grandfathers' sons,  
Know that birds flying high  
Are not the easy ones; 130  
And how to aim our fire  
At targets we've not seen  
Makes our confused desire  
Rebel to discipline.

When luck and fate and chance 135  
Make each man what he is,  
What tune can call the dance  
That a wise man wouldn't hiss?  
How can we find a fact  
To justify our faith 140  
That some incisive act  
Must antedate our death?  
God we have blown away;  
We seek our hope in love.  
But in the glare of day 145  
Is that sweet hope enough?  
No: we must find beneath  
Our too easy despair  
Hard steel within the sheath  
That hides it from the air; 150  
Facing the tough truth  
That what we're forced to know  
Is still a seed for growth  
Unkilled by snow;  
Facing the sharp wind 155  
That chills not us alone,  
But carves from man's mind  
More dignity than stone.

## VIII

Wisdom and love begin with simple things,  
A leaf in the rain, sunlight, apples and laughter; 160

These we can share, children and old men,  
 Merely by opening our eyes. And when our thought,  
 Stretched to its furthest reach, like Plato's, sees  
 The calm eternal essence of all good,  
 That we can share, those few of us who know. 165  
 But in between the world of flowers and God,  
 Between the first simplicity and the last,  
 Here where we rack our lives in struggle and danger,  
 Sharing and knowing what to share become  
 Almost impossible, and only the wind 170  
 Blowing from Time and into Time can make  
 Our differing battles seem at last the same.  
 Yet if we dwell on loneliness, on fear,  
 We are only half ourselves. We are not alone;  
 And more than Time and Time's relentless wind, 175  
 Blowing over our births, our lives, our deaths,  
 Makes each of us a part of all his world.  
 Between the grass-blade and the outmost star,  
 Between the mind's Aldebaran and the dust,  
 Though chaos seems at first the only rule, 180  
 We still can find a promise and a plan,  
 And from confusion carve the strength we need  
 By finding inward order in ourselves.  
 Wherever we are we must forever remember  
 The voice within that says, "Wait: be still." 185  
 You will hear it speak in sunlight and darkness, will hear it  
 Flying your bomber over the bleak sand  
 Or crouching behind your gun on the hostile island;  
 You will hear it beneath the autumn crow's wild cawing  
 Breaking the October hush of lonely hills. 190  
 Under the roar of tanks you will suddenly hear it;  
 As long as you stay a man you will hear that voice,  
 Always you'll hear that voice, saying, "Be still:  
 Build on me."

## IX

And when we have heard, O when we all have heard, 195  
 Then we may dare to love, to create love,  
 Not merely satisfaction of desire,  
 But love of all we have known, all we shall know.  
 Then out of wisdom in our single hearts  
 Love, unexpected Phoenix, springs to the sun, 200  
 And selfish love flowers to emulation  
 Of love sharing and acting in all the world;  
 And every usual necessary thing,  
 The toothbrush slanting in the bathroom glass,  
 The latchkey turning in the door—a smile, 205



Are sudden tokens of our possible union;  
And as we share them under the daily sun  
Honor and wisdom come alive again,  
And we can hear their voices, humble and proud,  
Echoing down the corridors of our minds, 210

Singing: "You are not alone,  
Bright angel of dust;  
You are flower and stone,  
Are diamond and rust."

Singing: "Not alone 220  
Does your heart strive  
Within white bone  
To keep love alive."

"Not alone," singing, 225  
Soars the wise voice.  
And echo, ringing,  
Sings, "Rejoice!"





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## NOTES FOR READING AND WRITING

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### THE WORLD OF THE SENSES AND NATURE

1. Trace the steps by which Arnold Bennett shows the connection between the observation of individuals—or events—and the complete understanding of them in relation to their total background, their past, present, and future. Illustrate from your reading the truth or falsity of this statement from *Seeing Life*: "An ugly deed—such as a deed of cruelty—takes on artistic beauty when its origin and hence its fitness in the general scheme begins to be comprehended." *Suggestions for writing*: In a taxi (bus, street car, or train); First impressions revised; Observations on my way to class; The character of a street; "Every street is a mirror, an illustration, an exposition, an explanation of the human beings who live in it"; A crowd gathers; Looking without seeing; Coma; The feminine instinct; Prigs and other futile souls; The charity which signs cheques; The trouble of understanding; We are insular; A room of one's own; Gloomy preoccupations; The hinterland of consciousness; Learning the whole truth from the face; A plain face; A name has contented you; Veils; Watching the procession; Introducing myself against my background.

2. If you think the author of *Young Writer Remembering Chicago* has cultivated the "special art of seeing," give illustrations of his use of this faculty. Discuss the employment of sensuous detail in building up the total impression of this selection. Comment on the differences in theme and mood through the four sections; the means of achieving unity. Compare the pictures of New York and Chicago with Wolfe's picture of a street remembered. What attitudes and values of each author emerge? *Suggestions for writing*: The hurly-burly season; Panhandle boys; A booster for my city; Freshman remembering his home town; Youth does not always win; Heroes; Bucking the wind; I am sorry.

3. In what respects does the account of the Baer-Louis fight fulfill the requirements of Bennett for "seeing life," interpreting the individual in relation to his background, and suggesting the social relationships involved in the situations? *Suggestions for writing*: Ringside seats; The champion; Rooters I have known; An athletic contest.

4. We shall encounter many criticisms of the machine in its effects on man. What does *The Man with a Tractor* suggest as to the potentiality of the machine for increasing the joys of living? What does the essay suggest as to the changing position of man in relation to nature?

5. Discuss the farm pictured by Mark Twain as an ideal background for a growing boy. What methods does he use to achieve variety? *Suggestions for writing:* I can remember; My first day at school; A childhood hero; A stranger in the family; My phantasy world; Books that colored my childhood; The farm early in the morning; Night in the country.

6. The selection from *Black Boy* represents Wright's earliest remembered sense impressions and suggests vividly their emotional impact on the four-year-old boy. It will be interesting to compare this passage with the similar one from Thomas Wolfe's *The Web and the Rock*. Analyze the relation between the sense images in the Wright passage and the boy's emotions, summarizing your impressions of his personality as it is being shaped by his experiences. What senses seem to be especially keen? In as concrete language as possible, make a list of your own early sense impressions.

7. Comment on the basic needs of the dwellers at Cross Creek in *Here Is Home* as compared with the needs of most people whom you know. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the simple life of these people? Describe the character of human relationships at Cross Creek. How are the various individuals brought to life for the reader? Why does the author feel that Cross Creek is home? Note the descriptive passages, the use of sense images, color words, and contrasts, and the means of conveying emotional attitudes. What is the value of the interspersed narrative incidents? Summarize your reactions to life at Cross Creek, *Suggestions for writing:* The things I must have for happiness; The neighborhood gossip; My favorite walk; I prefer country life to city life (or *vice versa*); The magic of childhood; Brotherhood at Cross Creek; A misunderstanding that brought me a friend.

8. In the selection from *Swann's Way*, Proust illustrates the psychological process by which all that has ever been a part of our experience may be recalled through association. Through the recall of a single sense impression, see how much of the world of your childhood you can recreate. *Suggestions for writing:* Strands of memory; The spell is broken; How I learned to concentrate; Distractions; Mental color blindness.

9. Where would you place the responsibility for Paul's tragedy? Discuss his family relationships and the social and economic forces as they contributed to the shaping of his personality. Analyze the various means which Paul employs to escape from reality. How do you explain his arrogant manner before the faculty group? Discuss the story as a severe indictment of our educational system and of the values cherished on Cordelia Street. What change do you note in Paul's escapes from reality after he is taken out of school and forbidden entrance to the theater and the opera house? Analyze Paul's interest in art. To what extent is it an interest in art for its own sake? *Suggestions for writing:* A non-conformist in my class; The ban of suspension; Before the faculty; Private worlds; Listening to a symphony; An orgy of living; On having someone held up to one as a model; Making believe.

10. What light does the selection from *Typhoon* throw on Conrad's view of man and nature? How does he give personality to natural forces? Study the descriptive effects, noting especially the appeal to various senses and the force given by the verbs of action.

11. Discuss the possible autobiographical elements that Wolfe may have included in the picture of George Webber's background in *The Street of the Day*. In *The Story of a Novel* in *The Arts* section Wolfe tells something of the influence of his own home and community on his writing. Do you think he exaggerates the influence of the physical surroundings of childhood, or can you find evidences of such influences in the shaping of your own personality? Find especially good illustrations of the various kinds of sense impressions recalled here and note the concreteness of detail with which they are presented. What details help to build up the boy's social background and to characterize his family? *Suggestions for writing*: When a street was the center of the universe; Returning later to childhood scenes; Saturday night in my home town; Sunday morning; Early school days; The season I like best; Commencement program.

12. *There Was a Child Went Forth* suggests in vivid sense imagery many of the childhood experiences that shape the personality of the individual. What aspects of life does Whitman seem to value most keenly? What further impression of his response to life do you obtain from *Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun*? What relation between the world of the senses and the world of human relationships is implied? Compare the theme of Whitman's poems with that of *Birches*. How do they differ in mood?

13. What is Rupert Brooke's purpose in paying tribute to the things he has loved? Compare the things he praises with those in Keats's *Proem to Endymion*. Refute or establish the thesis that for Brooke beauty is found solely in things; for Keats, in the effect of things on the spirit. Discuss the philosophical implications of this problem. How does Keats's poem answer the idea expressed by Brooke that "nothing remains"? Discuss the appropriateness of the images in Fletcher's *Down the Mississippi*. Select your favorite pictures. In the two poems of Gibson sense impressions serve as a point of departure for what reflections? Which of the two poems is the more vivid for you and why?

14. Summarize the arguments presented by the mariners in *The Lotos-Eaters* for the life of sensuous ease as opposed to the life of courageous action urged by their leader, Ulysses. For further development of his philosophy see the poem *Ulysses* in the section *The Good Life*. Present concretely your own argument for either point of view, or record a conversation or debate in which you present the opposing philosophies. Trace the relation between the images, the lyric effects, and the thought of Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*.

15. Summarize the argument of Herrick for the eager pursuit of sensuous delight. Comment on the effectiveness of the final note of tragedy in this joyous poem. Compare the mood and theme of *To His Coy Mistress* and

*Corinna's Going A-Maying*. In what respect is MacLeish's *You*, Andrew Marvell an answer to, or continuation of, Marvell's poem? What is the common denominator with regard to form and to attitude toward life in all of these poems?

16. What is the meaning of *Euclid Alone Has Looked on Beauty Bare*? Refer to Eve Curie's *Four Years in a Shed* or to La Farge's *The High Plateaux of Asia* for further evidence of the scientist's aesthetic response to the revelations of natural law. What contrast is implied in *Spring* between the mood inspired by response to nature and the poet's disillusionment with life?

17. Some modern poets, perhaps influenced by new concepts of science, fail to find in nature the restorative power and joy which earlier poets discovered. Trace this theme through Arnold's *In Harmony with Nature*, Taggard's *Try Tropic*, and Spender's *I Hear the Cries of Evening*. Supplementary poems more specifically expressing this idea may be found in the poems listed under *The World of Science*. Write a paper based on your study of this note in poetry, relating it to your own feelings concerning nature. In an essay by Aldous Huxley, *Wordsworth in the Tropics*, you will find a suggestive refutation of the idea that nature can afford moral guidance and emotional solace.

18. Compare the farm boy in Sandburg's *Prairie* with the youth in *Young Writer Remembering Chicago*. In what way might the two be considered representative of social changes which have taken place within the last twenty years? Can the farmer today face the future as confidently as Sandburg's son of the prairie? Discuss the problem in an essay. An interesting study might be made in a paper comparing the theme, mood, and style of Sandburg's *Prairie* with Whitman's *Pioneers! O Pioneers!* in the section on *The World of Tomorrow*.

19. In Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* the poet's sensuous response to nature intensifies his awareness of human suffering and death. Trace the relation between the sense images of the poet's surroundings and his changing mood. What is the meaning for him of the song of the nightingale?

20. *The Morning Song of Senlin* is a part of a longer poem entitled *Senlin: a Biography*. It places man with his minor preoccupations in the commonplace round of his day against the mysterious background of the "swiftly tilting planet." What things give Senlin pleasure and evoke reflection and gratitude for life? Compare this poem with *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

ESSAYS, BIOGRAPHY, JOURNALS AND LETTERS

Beebe, William, *Galapagos, World's End; Jungle Peace*.

Cable, Mildred, and French, Francesca, *The Gobi Desert*

Cannon, Le Grand, *Look to the Mountain*

Eastman, Max, *The Enjoyment of Poetry; The Enjoyment of Laughter*

Gissing, George, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*

Gray, James, *Pine, Prairie and Stream*

Grayson, David, *Essays in Contentment*

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|---|---|
| Hemingway, Ernest, <i>The Green Hills of Africa</i>   | Rourke, Constance, <i>Audubon</i>                                       |
| Hudson, W. H., <i>Far Away and Long Ago</i>   | Sanderson, Ivan, <i>Animal Treasure</i>                                 |
| Keats, John, <i>Letters</i>   | de Saint-Exupéry, Antoine, <i>Flight to Arras; Wind, Sand and Stars</i> |
| Lindbergh, Anne Morrow, <i>The Steep Ascent; North to the Orient; Listen! the Wind</i>                            | Simon, Charlie May, <i>Straw in the Sun</i>                             |
| Machen, Arthur, <i>The Hill of Dreams</i>   | Strode, Hudson, <i>South by Thunderbird</i>                             |
| Mansfield, Katharine, <i>Journals; Letters</i>  | Thoreau, Henry David, <i>Walden</i>                                     |
| Pater, Walter, <i>Marius the Epicurean</i>  | Wolfe, Linnie Marsh, <i>Son of the Wilderness</i>                       |
| Peattie, Donald Culross, <i>Singing in the Wilderness; An Almanac for Moderns; Green Laurels; A Prairie Grove</i> |   |
| Powys, John Cowper, <i>The Meaning of Culture</i>   | FICTION   |
| Priestley, J. B., <i>Midnight in the Desert</i>   | Hudson, W. H., <i>Green Mansions</i>                                    |
| Rich, Louise Dickinson, <i>We Took to the Woods</i>   | Huxley, Aldous, <i>Point Counterpoint</i>                               |
| Rodman, Selden, <i>The Poetry of Flight</i>   | Powys, John Cowper, <i>Wolf Solent</i>                                  |
|   | Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, <i>The Yearling</i>                          |
|   | Stewart, George, <i>Storm</i>   |
|   | Wilde, Oscar, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>                         |
|   | Wolfe, Thomas, <i>Look Homeward Angel; Of Time and the River</i>        |

## PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. Evaluate in the light of your own experience the criticism that Steffens makes of his own upbringing and his methods of rearing his son. An interesting report might be given on Steffens' relationship with his father and his son by reference to his autobiography and his letters. Steffens suggests in his autobiography that his true education was a process of unlearning. How is this idea reflected in the essay? Study the early chapters of the autobiography and the later letters for material that may throw further light on this concept. *Suggestions for writing:* If I had been my father; My father's son (or daughter); Hints on bringing up children; On bringing up my parents; Things I have had to unlearn; "I think so, but I don't know"; Punishment enough; The tragedy of this comedy; We'll forget it now; Whoppers; Grown-ups say it's so; Indirect inheritance; They don't understand a fellow; Family traits; Letting off steam.

2. What support does Pearl Buck's analysis lend to the argument of Krutch that love has ceased to be a value? Make a study of a modern novelist, such as Hemingway, Dos Passos, Joyce, Aldous Huxley, or Lewis, testing the validity of Krutch's argument in your analysis. What other forces in modern life might Krutch have brought to bear on his thesis? Does he over-emphasize the place of literature in the life of the average man? *Suggestions for writing:* On falling in love; Something that Krutch (or Buck) overlooked; Educating women; He's just like a boy! A home vs. a career; No woman has a man's chance; A masculine bugaboo; The double standard; If I want dates; Dutch treat; Men are like that; Women are like that; Beautiful but dumb.

3. Compare Brown's analysis in *The Return to Love* of the decline of "romantic" love with that of Krutch. What evidence of changing attitudes



does Brown present? What expressions of love other than those between the sexes does he recognize as values? Describe his requirements for a lasting marriage. In what respects would he agree with Pearl Buck? *Suggestions for writing*: Juvenile delinquency and the home; The effect of the war on love; Falling in love versus growing into love; College romances as foundations for enduring love; The basis of enduring friendship; Should college courses on marriage be required? Some attitudes toward love among college students I know; How can we apply belief in love to a world of hate?

4. In *What Is Emotional Maturity*? what does Cohn mean by the tragedy of life? How does Santayana define happiness? What does the author mean by the statement that marriage is a beginning and not an end? What ways does the author suggest for achieving emotional adulthood? *Suggestions for writing*: Learning your place in the world; A chastening experience; Marriage is not an end but a beginning; Settling down; The search for perfection; Getting something for nothing; You can't have your cake and eat it too; Characteristics of immaturity; Looking facts in the face; Made for each other; Are marriages made in heaven? What is compatibility? Can we achieve emotional maturity in college relationships?

5. How would you analyze the relationship between father and daughter as it is reflected in Fitzgerald's *Letters to His Daughter*? What do you learn of Fitzgerald's personality and sense of values? What do you infer regarding his daughter's character and interests? What do you think of his advice to his daughter? *Suggestions for writing*: My parents write me a letter; It hurts me more than it does you; Fatherly advice; Mistakes to avoid in college; Being my father's daughter (or son); I write to my father (or mother).

6. After reading *Parents and Parades*, describe the Damrosch home, commenting on the relations between the parents and between the parents and their children. What do the constant arguments and disagreements tell you about the compatibility of the several members of the family? Discuss Pearl Buck's theories on men-women relationships as they apply or do not apply to this home. *Suggestions for writing*: Problem parents; Bringing up my parents; When my parents embarrassed me; A memorable party; My parents' religion; Is a woman's place in the home? Women in political life; A report on some of the early figures in the suffragist movement, such as Inez Milholland or Alice Duer Miller.

7. What do you learn in *Discovery of a Father* of the reasons for Anderson's feeling somewhat ashamed of his father? If you think his feeling typical of young people, discuss the reasons for it. Why do American children want their parents to conform to accepted stereotypes? Is this true also of parents in their attitudes toward their children? What impression do you get of the mother in the Anderson home? Fuller pictures of her are given elsewhere in *Memoirs* and in *A Story Teller's Story*. Explain the significance of the final incident in the boy's growth toward maturity. *Suggestions for writing*: "They thought he was funny, but I didn't"; "You hear it said that fathers want their

sons to be what they feel they cannot themselves be, but I tell you it also works the other way"; A teller of tall tales; Family traits I have discovered in myself; A childhood experience which revealed another personality to me.

8. Compare the implied relation of father and son in *The Father* with that in *The Fly*. Discuss self-love as the motivating force of the two fathers and contrast the implications in the conclusions. How does the author of *The Father* achieve remarkable concentration of effect and at the same time suggestiveness in this brief masterpiece? What is the role of the priest? Write a character sketch of the father. Comment on the relation of the end of this story to the beginning. Are you prepared for this conclusion? By what means?

9. What atmosphere is created by the opening paragraph of *Another Spring*? How are the contrasts between life and death brought out? Is the central problem of the story more than simply the choice of a *Cordelia*? Formulate your analysis of the problem in a clear-cut statement. Consider both external and internal conflicts. Characterize Miss Bishop and trace her development throughout the story. Read the scenes between Cordelia and her father in *King Lear* and compare the situation in the play with that in the story for elements in common and points of difference. Does the writer of the story achieve a truly tragic effect in presenting these relatively simple characters and situations? In whom is your main interest: the daughter, the father, or Miss Bishop? How do you account for Miss Bishop's change in attitude toward the girl? *Suggestions for writing*: Description of a drama workshop; Leading lady; Problems of an amateur actor (actress, director, scene painter); Description of a campus eating-place; A conversation overheard; A visit from Father (or Mother); "A score of farewells at the end of every June"; A selfless teacher; Parallels with *King Lear*.

10. Twenty-five years ago in popular fiction, the theme of *Boy in the Summer Sun*, the breaking up of a love affair, was usually treated as the occasion for a dramatic scene or an exhibition of emotionalism. What social and economic aspects of our life today might be responsible for a change in treatment? Do you think that this story is representative of the reactions that your contemporaries might make to a similar situation? How does the fact that love has changed to kindness alter the nature of the emotion?

11. What methods of characterization does Mr. Steinbeck use to emphasize the incompatibility of wife and husband in *The Chrysanthemums*? At what point are you given a clue to the real motive of the stranger? Discuss the ironic contrast between the stranger's real motive and the woman's interpretation of it. What is the relation between her desire to see the fight and her disillusioning experience? How does the line "Each man kills the thing he loves" relate to the character of the woman? *Suggestions for writing*: Saturday night celebration; Clashes in personality; On revealing myself to a stranger; Making things grow; Thwarted creative impulses; Artistic creations in everyday life; Opportunities for creative expression in my community.

12. How would you define the nature of Mr. Mitty's secret life? How do you account for the particular form it takes? What do you learn of the character of his wife and of their marital relationship? What is reflected of Thurber's attitude toward men-and-women relationships and toward human nature in general? *Suggestions for writing:* My secret life; My ego is deflated (inflated); Main Street; Talking to oneself; We live only once; Things close in; Inscrutable to the last.

13. Around what conflicts within Claudia's personality is the play, *Claudia*, centered? What problems emerge in her relationship to David, to her mother? What are the forces responsible for the resolution of the internal and external conflicts? What characteristics of her mother and David are particularly conducive to Claudia's successful working out of these problems? How does the resolution of the play give support to Cohn's statement that marriage is a beginning and not an end? Discuss the play in relation to the ideas concerning men-and-women relationships expressed by Cohn, Buck, and Krutch. *Suggestions for writing:* Personal magnetism; The mother image; Making friends with pain; Meeting life on its own terms; The advantages (or disadvantages) of youthful marriages. Compare the problems of Claudia and David with the problems of the young couples in some of the plays in the bibliography that follows: Compare the mother in *Claudia* with the mother in Sidney Howard's *The Silver Cord*.

14. Show how by understatement Millay's *Love Is Not All* really builds a strong case for love. Compare this sonnet with Donne's *The Indifferent* and *Sonnet 116* of Shakespeare. Make a critical study of Edna St. Vincent Millay, using as a point of departure her support or repudiation of Krutch's theory in *The Life and Death of a Value*. Compare Millay's poems with the sonnets of Mrs. Browning in theme and mood.

15. Wordsworth said of Shakespeare's sonnets, "With this same key Shakespeare unlocked his heart." Browning replied, "Then, the less Shakespeare he." Read more of Shakespeare's sonnets and draw your own conclusions on the problem of whether or not Shakespeare herein reveals his personal emotions. Study the function of the concluding couplets in Shakespeare's sonnets. Write sentence summaries of the central thought of each sonnet.

16. Summarize the excuses which Andrea del Sarto offers for his failure to achieve a place with the greatest artists. Does Browning accept Andrea's conclusions or does he present them as rationalizations concealing the truth? What evidence can you bring to bear on this problem? Look up Vasari's account of Andrea del Sarto in his *Lives of the Painters* to discover what support Browning had for his characterizations of Andrea and his wife.

17. Comment on the significance of each of the nouns in the title, *Satires of Circumstance*. Discuss the element of satire and the role played by chance or circumstance in each of the selections. If you have read one of Hardy's novels, discuss these same elements in the larger work.

18. Blake, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley are all called "romantic poets." What qualities do you find that they have in common? What differences? Compare Wordsworth's *She Was a Phantom of Delight* with Byron's *She Walks in Beauty* for theme and mood. Discover what you can of the usual treatment of women in the poetry of these two men.

19. Write an essay considering one of these problems: the relationship between Fanny Brawne and Keats as reflected in their letters and in Keats's poetry; a comparison of the values which Shakespeare found in love with those sought by D. G. Rossetti; the treatment of love by a modern woman poet: Millay, Parker, Teasdale, Taggard, Moore, Tietjens or Wylie; the treatment of love by a nineteenth-century woman poet: Mrs. Browning, Christina Rossetti, Emily Brontë, or Emily Dickinson; the relationship between Shelley's treatment of love in his poetry and his actual experience (see Maurois' *Ariel* and Shelley's *Epipsychidion*); the treatment of love by one of the following poets: E. A. Robinson, W. E. Leonard, Robert Frost, E. L. Masters, W. B. Yeats, Rupert Brooke, or Archibald MacLeish.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

#### ESSAYS, CRITICISM, BIOGRAPHY AND LETTERS

Adler, Alfred, *Understanding Human Nature*

Bailey, Margaret Emerson, *Goodbye, Proud World*

Buck, Pearl, *Of Men and Women*

Cohn, David L., *Love in America*

Collins, Joseph, *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life*

Coffin, Robert Tristan, *Lost Paradise*

Dell, Floyd, *Love in the Machine Age*

Espey, John, *Minor Heresies*

Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Crack-up*

Freud, Sigmund, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*

Hathaway, Katharine Butler, *The Little Locksmith*

Harding, Esther, *The Way of All Women*

Hawes, Elizabeth, *Why Women Cry*

Miers, Earl, *The Ivy Years*

Reik, Theodore, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*

Scheinfeld, Amram, *Women and Men*

Steffens, Lincoln, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*

#### FICTION

Anderson, Sherwood, *Winesburg, Ohio*

Aragon, Louis, *Residential Quarter*

Austen, Jane, *Pride and Prejudice*

Bennett, Arnold, *The Old Wives' Tale*

Benson, Sally, *Women and Children First*

Bromfield, Louis, *Possession*

Brontë, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre*

Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*

Buck, Pearl, *The Good Earth*

Burnett, Whit (ed.), *Time to Be Young*

Butler, Samuel, *The Way of All Flesh*

Carroll, Gladys, *As the Earth Turns*

Cather, Willa, *A Lost Lady*

Charles, Joan, *The Dark Glass; Son and Stranger*

Chase, Mary Ellen, *Mary Peters*

Chekhov, Anton, *Love, and Other Stories*

de la Roche, Mazo, the *jalna* novels

du Gard, Roger Martin, *The Thibaults*

Farrell, James, *Studs Lonigan; My Days of Anger*

Flavin, Martin, *Journey in the Dark*

Galsworthy, John, *The Forsyte Saga*

Gilpatrick, Naomi, *The Broken Pitcher*

Glasgow, Ellen, *They Stood to Folly*

Graham, Gwethalyn, *Earth and High Heaven*

Hardy, Thomas, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles; Jude the Obscure*

Hull, Helen, *A Circle in the Water*

Huxley, Aldous, *Point Counterpoint*

Janeway, Elizabeth, *The Walsh Girls*

Kehoe, William, *A Sweep of Dusk*

- Kelly, Judith, *Marriage Is a Private Affair*  
 Kuhn, René, *34 Charlton*  
 Landi, Elissa, *The Pear Tree*  
 Langley, Dorothy, *Dark Medallion*  
 Lawrence, D. H., *Women in Love; Sons and Lovers*  
 Lawrence, Josephine, *Let Us Consider One Another*  
 Lehmann, Rosamond, *Dusty Answer; The Ballad and the Source*  
 Lewis, Sinclair, *Main Street; Babbitt; Cass Timberlane*  
 MacLennan, Hugh, *Two Solitudes*  
 Mann, Thomas, *Buddenbrooks*  
 Marquand, John P., *The Late George Apley*  
 Maxwell, William, *The Folded Leaf*  
 McCarthy, Mary, *The Company She Keeps*  
 Morgan, Charles, *The Fountain*  
 Morris, Edith, *Three Who Loved*  
 Proust, Marcel, *The Remembrance of Things Past*  
 Saroyan, William, *The Human Comedy*  
 Schmitt, Gladys, *The Gates of Aulis*  
 Seley, Stephen, *The Cradle Will Fall*  
 Smith, Lillian, *Strange Fruit*  
 Stafford, Jean, *Boston Adventure*  
 Thackeray, W. M., *Vanity Fair*  
 Tolstoi, Leo, *Anna Karenina*  
 Undset, Sigrid, *Kristin Lavransdatter*  
 Wescott, Glenway, *The Grandmothers*  
 Wickenden, Dan, *The Wayfarers*  
 Wilder, Thornton, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*  
 Wilhelm, Gale, *Never Let Me Go*  
 Wolfe, Thomas, *Look Homeward, Angel; Of Time and the River; The Web and the Rock; You Can't Go Home Again*  
 Woolf, Virginia, *The Waves; To the Lighthouse*  
 Zugsmith, Leane, *Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood*
- DRAMA
- Akins, Zoe, *The Old Maid*  
 Barrie, James M., *What Every Woman Knows*  
 Barry, Philip, *The Philadelphia Story; The Animal Kingdom*  
 Behrman, S. N., *End of Summer; No Time for Comedy; Biography*  
 Besier, Rudolf, *The Barratts of Wimpole Street*  
 Chekhov, Anton, *The Cherry Orchard*  
 Ferber, Edna and Kaufman, George S., *Stage Door*  
 Franken, Rose, *Another Language*  
 Hart, Moss, *Lady in the Dark*  
 Hellman, Lillian, *The Little Foxes*  
 Howard, Sidney, *The Silver Cord*  
 Ibsen, Henrik, *A Doll's House; Hedda Gabler; Ghosts*  
 Kaufman, George S. and Hart, Moss, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*  
 Kelly, George, *Craig's Wife*  
 Lindsay, Howard, and Crouse, Russel, *Life with Father*  
 Milne, A. A., *The Dover Road; Mr. Pin Passes By*  
 Molnar, Ferenc, *Liliom*  
 Odets, Clifford, *Rocket to the Moon; Golden Boy*  
 O'Neill, Eugene, *Strange Interlude; Beyond the Horizon; The Great God Brown; Ah, Wilderness; Mourning Becomes Electra*  
 Shakespeare, William, *Romeo and Juliet; Othello; King Lear*  
 Sophocles, *Antigone; Electra*  
 Spewack, Bella and Samuel, *Boy Meets Girl*  
 Van Druten, John, *The Distaff Side; Young Woodley; The Voice of the Turtle; I Remember Mama*  
 Wilder, Thornton, *Our Town*  
 Williams, Tennessee, *The Glass Menagerie*

## THE ARTS

1. Maxwell Anderson holds that the heart of the artist's message is that "men are not essentially as they are, but as they imagine themselves to be." Find support for this idea in the following poems of Browning: *Abt Vogler*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto*. Write a paper presenting

your conclusions. How does Maxwell Anderson establish his conviction that the scientist reinforces the faith of prophet and artist? Show why Anderson's insistence on the need for a personal, national, and racial faith must not be confused with a creed such as that of the Nazis. What sort of world does he envision? *Suggestions for writing:* If the time arrives when our young men and women lose their extravagant faith in the dollar and turn to the arts, we may then become a great nation; Are we awakening to an interest in the arts in America? The artist and his public; The arts and the workingman; Art in the home; Should the arts have a more prominent place in the curriculum? My experience in the realm of the arts; The little theater as a social force; Radio, the arts, and the public. There are no selections here which treat of architecture or sculpture. If your interest lies in one of these media, read a number of articles in this field and make a report on your findings.

2. Compare Fadiman's evolution as a reader in *My Life Is an Open Book* with your own. What is Fadiman's argument against censorship of reading? Why does he feel that current juvenile literature is meretricious? According to Fadiman, what do children really want from the books they read? On what theories does the author base his contention that the books loved by children will be read the longest? What is the significance of the fact that, among the books listed, several have few women characters and depend hardly at all on romantic interest? Why does the author predict that *Alice in Wonderland* will outlast the others? Why does reading cease to be an adventure in one's college years? What truths about reading did Fadiman learn at fourteen when he took the survey course by proxy? Why does he recommend that one read only those books that are above oneself? What did he conceive to be the values of his experiments in difficult reading and in his literary fast? What are the dangers of continuous reading? What made Erskine a great teacher? *Suggestions for writing:* Man is an animal that laughs; Trial and error; From the cradle to the grave; Reading as a disease; "One's first book, kiss, home run, is always the best"; My tastes are catholic; My literary prophecies; The whims of literary fashion; "After seventeen the books choose you, not you the books"; My second-decade reading; "That's just the way I feel!" Outwitting Father Time; Literary marijuana; My reading experiments; Are the most popular teachers the best educators? Should books be censored? Make a study of several books which have been censored in various parts of the United States—books such as Joyce's *Ulysses*, Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, and Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Attempt to distinguish between the expressed reasons and the real reasons for the censorship. Compare some representative books for children today with those read by Fadiman in his childhood.

3. In the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, what distinction is drawn between the word *wisdom*, which is the result of the work of scientists and thinkers, and the word *truth*, which signifies the writer's rendering "justice to the visible universe"? What is the relation of art to the senses?

Show how Conrad's practice in the selection which you read from *Typhoon* demonstrates his aesthetic theory. Art, according to Conrad, both speaks to our already existing "invincible conviction of solidarity" and it awakens "that feeling of unavoidable solidarity." How is this dual function of art established by Conrad?

4. In *The Story of a Novel* how does Wolfe suggest that he resolved the problem of using the materials of his life in his writing? What other problems of the artist does he suggest? How does he evaluate his weaknesses, his strengths? Interpret the meaning of his statement that central to all living is man's search to find a father. What were the materials of Wolfe's art? *Suggestions for writing*: Writers who have influenced me; A faraway world; When I was a child; "Fame was a shining, bright, and most uncertain thing"; Why am I here? My native town; The personality of the artist; An emotional vortex; The optimism of youth; My temperament; My resources as a man (or woman) and as a writer; Fact or fable; A voice once heard; Intemperate excess; More than one life can hold; A ravenous desire; Reasoning it out; A true estimate of my talents; My first beginning.

5. Of what did Farrell's "education in living" consist, and how did it become a part of his novel? Compare his essay, *A Novelist Begins*, with Conrad's preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and determine the differences in social background, purpose, and method of the two writers. *Suggestions for writing*: Burning bridges; Defending myself from myself; A nobody; Miserable grains of experience; At loggerheads; My spiritual godfathers; Spiritual poverty; A social ritual.

6. How does Mark Van Doren limit the meaning of the term *sensitiveness* in his definition of the poet? How does this limitation affect also his interpretation of Wordsworth's analysis? According to Wordsworth, what characteristics possessed by the ordinary man does the poet share in an intensified form? Read Day Lewis's *Hope for Poetry* and the entire Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and suggest how the social and political changes of the last decades may have helped to make some of the theories of Day Lewis a verification of certain ideas advanced by Wordsworth. What distinctions does Wordsworth make between the poet and the man of science? In the light of Engle's *Poetry in a Machine Age* discuss how modern poets have attempted "to carry sensation into the midst of the objects of science" and to make science a "genuine inmate of the household of man." How do the poems in the following section, *The World of Science*, illustrate this attempt of modern poets? Select specific figures derived from the realm of science and show how they put on "a form of flesh and blood." How does Van Doren destroy the common conception of the "sensitive poet"? How fair is he in his assertion that Wordsworth created considerable confusion in his picture of the poet as a man with a "peculiar mind which enables him to plumb the world's appearances"?

7. Outline Engle's analysis of the influences of modern machinery, psy-

chology, and sociology on poetry today. This essay suggests many interesting problems for further investigation: A study of the relation between mood and verse in MacLeish's *Conquistador*; The relation of mood and verse and the sources of imagery in *John Brown's Body*; The use of machine imagery in Sandburg, or in the poems of Auden, Day Lewis, Spender.

8. Read Arnold's *Dover Beach* in the section on *The Good Life* as a background for understanding *Dover Beach Revisited*. Who is the first victim of the author's satire? How do you know he is being satirized? What is the significance of the episode relating to the Arnold expert? What were Professor Dewing's criteria for judging a poem? What relationship is pointed between Professor Twitchell's life and his attitude toward literature? Summarize the bases for Professor Mole's and Professor Hale's evaluations of Arnold. Is Prampton being satirized, and if so, why? What approach to literature, if any, represents the author's conviction? *Suggestions for writing*: An analysis of a favorite poem from one of the points of view satirized in *Dover Beach Revisited*; A sketch of a professor in action; The values and limitations of one or more of the critical approaches to literature introduced in this selection.

9. Analyze the influence of Hollywood, as suggested by *The Long Arm of Hollywood*, under at least four main heads, giving some specific subdivisions and illustrations for each. Comment specifically on the meaning of the following quotations listed under *Suggestions for writing*: "Hollywood is one of the key symbol-centers of the world"; "Maximum profits reward maximum innocuousness"; "In the recondite naïveté of Hollywood's movies, life is a simple game between love and misunderstanding, between the pure in heart and the other kind"; "Hollywood's racial typologies are forever dismaying"; "The emphasis of the films upon action, violence and brash conduct necessarily involves a devaluation of the thoughtful and the contemplative"; "Hollywood represents a challenge to the sovereignty of church, school and family in the realm of values"; How motion pictures have influenced my moral attitudes or tastes; Does virtue always triumph? Fashions and the films; Comparison of a novel (or play) with its Hollywood version; A study of marriage and divorce in recent motion pictures; Possibilities of the films in education.

10. After reading *What Music Means*, compare music as communication with poetry or painting as communication, commenting on the reason the layman may expect to find music more difficult to understand. Compare the experience of learning to recognize the form and meaning of music as described by Haggin with the experience of the peasant woman in *True Believer*. Why is it easier to grasp the meaning of a Kern and Rodgers composition than that of a Mozart or Beethoven? What are the limitations involved in approaching understanding of music through study of the composer and his background? *Suggestions for writing*: Listen several times to a recorded symphony or concerto and describe your experience; Compare



your appreciation of music with your appreciation of another art form; Discuss your taste in music, whether popular or classical; Describe an audience at a concert; Radio listeners; Music as an anodyne; The classics have infiltrated Hollywood.

11. In his daily letters to his brother Theo, Van Gogh expressed his most intimate thoughts, his ideas of art, his doubts and disappointments, and his intense satisfaction when he knew his work had achieved something of his passion to convey in color the meaning and beauty of life. Compare his interest in peasant life with that of Wordsworth. Why does he call himself a peasant-painter? What is his concept of truth in painting? What is his attitude toward the judgment of others? How does he describe his feeling while painting? Is there evidence that he intends to convey any criticism of society in his painting? Describe his method of working from life and yet employing imagination. What has this method in common with that of a realistic poet or novelist? What attitude toward his work might be suggestive to you in your writing problems? *Suggestions for writing:* Study one of Van Gogh's portraits of peasants and write a characterization of the person; Learning patience from nature; The simple life versus civilization; A creative task in which I have been absorbed.

12. How does the personality of Helen Hayes emerge in the portrait *Veni, Vidi, Vicky*? What were some of the factors in her background and circumstances which led to Miss Hayes's career as an actress? In what ways does Helen Hayes refuse to conform to the stereotype of the actress? What qualities of character have contributed to her acting success? What do you learn of her preparation for an important role on the stage? Why did she refuse to play in motion pictures after her experience in Hollywood? *Suggestions for writing:* All women are actresses; My parents discourage (encourage) my career; Looking into space; Pacing and brooding; An opening night; No sense of direction; The actress (or actor) I most admire; Why I prefer the legitimate stage; An evening at the theater; My experiences in amateur theatricals.

13. Discuss the ways in which Leonardo may be considered the "matchless composite of all that the Renaissance contributed to civilization." On the other hand, why was he a "lonely figure in the center of culture"? There has been of late almost more interest in Leonardo as man of science than as artist. Summarize his contributions to science. What relationship do you see between the artist and the scientist in Leonardo? Study the Mona Lisa and write your interpretation of her character. Refer to Pater's famous description of "La Gioconda" (Mona Lisa) in *The Renaissance*.

14. In *The Monster* what is the case for and against Wagner? Evaluate Taylor's conclusion that society owes the great artist a living. What do you think of the final vindication? *Suggestions for writing:* Delusions of grandeur; Listening to a monologue; A mania for being in the right; Agreeing for the sake of peace; Not for criticism, for applause; Feeling out of sorts; Does the

world owe the artist a living? Groveling without shame; A genius for making enemies; Between the lines; The joke was on us; Talking about oneself.

15. In the *Lord of Marutea* how is the character of Herr Müller built up before he appears on the scene? How do you account for the rapid changes in mood, the apparent inconsistencies of action in this character? Show how the musician transferred his individual creative urges to the molding of the artistic response in others. Have you ever observed a similar transference, perhaps in a teacher of music? Trace the temperamental conflict between Herr Müller's love of music, his love of his people, and his violent temper, and discuss the tragic resolution of this conflict. *Suggestions for writing:* The dictator at home; A lovable tyrant; A tragedy of thwarted talent; The music lover.

16. What conflicting forces within and without impinge upon the writer's consciousness in *A Life in the Day of a Writer*? What is the relationship of the title of the story to the author's theory of art? O'Brien, who placed this story in his collection of the best short stories of 1936, suggests that Miss Slesinger's "notable gift is her ability to use the stream of consciousness technique to reflect poignantly that curious insulation of modern metropolitan man and woman divided between inward aspiration and chromium-plated outward event. She can register for us better than any other writer I know the continuous bombardment of petty and irrelevant experience upon the soul of modern man. Her characters all dance in *Heartbreak House* with fixed smiles on their faces concealing the tragedy within." Discuss the implications of this criticism by direct reference to the story.

17. Explain the title, *True Believer*, in relation to the philosophy of this story. If you have ever seen a picture by Van Gogh which might be a study of this peasant woman, describe its effect upon you and tell why you think it is a portrait of "True Believer." Comment on the details that prepare you for the particular form of expression the woman finds. By implication, to what early craftsmen is she compared? What concept of the relation between art and life is represented by both Van Gogh and the peasant woman? Relate this concept to what you know or can discover of the philosophies of other modern artists. Explain this statement: "She had partaken of the profound and primal seeking toward form that there is in every process of the world." Can you relate this idea to other arts such as music and writing? Compare it with Haggin's ideas on music. Read *Letters to Theo*, written by Van Gogh to his brother, to see if you find support for the picture of the artist and his philosophy presented in this story. What is meant by these concluding words of Van Gogh: "So, Mother, you also love God with the draughtsman's fist"? *Suggestions for writing:* Van Gogh, the man and the artist (Read Irving Stone's *Lust for Life*); The medium in which I should like to express myself; A characterization of someone you know who is a creative personality (not necessarily an "artist"); "A man becomes a painter by painting"; When I discovered the joy of creating.

18. What view of the poet and his mission does Robinson express? Investigate the facts of his life to throw light on his meaning when he says: "The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours." Write a characterization of Robinson, man and poet, embodying your discoveries.

19. In Dauber's yearning to paint the sea "from the inside," Masfield probably expresses his own desire to paint the life of the sea realistically as a poet. Study some of his sea poems, relating them to his own experience on the sea.

20. What is the significance of the duality of the artist's nature suggested in *A Musical Instrument*? Can you illustrate the theme by reference to the lives of poets or artists?

21. Trace the argument of Genevieve Taggard for the superiority of music to speech. Of what does this activity become a symbol for her? If you have ever been a part of a choric or orchestral group, analyze your feelings in an essay.

22. What does Spender's poem, *Without That Once Clear Aim*, suggest to you about the problems of the poet in the contemporary world? Study other poems of Spender to discover whether poetry is really no more to him than "wings away." What is the idea of the poet's function expressed in *I Think Continually of Those Who Were Truly Great*?

23. What new themes for the poetry of a new world does Muriel Rukeyser outline in *Notes for a Poem*? Read in her *U.S.* to discover how she uses "factual timbers" in building her social poems. Refer again to Engle's *Poetry in a Machine Age* and try to establish a point of view regarding the problem of propaganda and art. Write a critical paper using the *Suggestions for further reading* as a guide.

24. In the sonnet from which MacLeish takes his title, Shakespeare proudly boasts of the immortality his verse imparts to his loved one. Why does MacLeish reject the usual idealization of a beautiful woman? How does he succeed, nevertheless, in building up a climactic picture in which "Beauty is truth"? Show how Keats, by a succession of images, arrives at the same conclusion that "Beauty is truth."

25. How does Shelley attest to the permanence of art as a means of achieving immortality of the human passions? Compare *To the Stone Cutters* and *Ozymandias* as tributes to the permanence of art.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

#### ESSAYS, CRITICISM, BIOGRAPHY AND LETTERS

Armstrong, Margaret, *Fanny Kemble*

Austin, Mary, *The American Rhythm*

Bennett, Arnold, *Journals*

Bowen, C., and von Meck, B., *Beloved Friend*

Cellini, Benvenuto, *Autobiography*

Chekhov, Anton, *Journals*

Cowley, Malcolm, *Exile's Return*

Craven, Thomas, *Modern Art; Men of Art*

Dali, Salvadore, *The Secret Life of Salvadore Dali*

Davenport, Marcia, *Mozart*

da Vinci, Leonardo, *Notebooks*

- Dell, Floyd, *Homecoming*  
 Downes, Edward, *Adventures in Symphonic Music*  
 Eastman, Max, *The Enjoyment of Poetry*  
 Enters, Agna, *Silly Girl*  
 Erskine, John, *What Is Music?*  
 Farrell, James, *The League of Frightened Philistines*  
 Faure, Elie, *History of Art*  
 Garwood, Darrell, *Artist in Iowa*  
 Haggin, B. H., *Music for the Man Who Enjoys Hamlet*  
 Hayes, Roland, *Angel Mo' and Her Son*  
 Hiler, Hilaire, *Why Abstract?*  
 Hoffman, Malvina, *Heads and Tales*  
 Jameson, Storm, *The Journal of Mary Hervey Russell*  
 Kreyborg, Alfred, *Troubadour*  
 Le Gallienne, Eva, *At Thirty-three*  
 Lewisoohn, Ludwig, *Expression in America*  
 Mansfield, Katherine, *Letters; Journals*  
 Mumford, Lewis, *Sticks and Stones*  
 Munro, Thomas, *The Enjoyment of Painting*  
 Nijinsky, Romola, *Life of Nijinsky*  
 Pach, Walter, *Queer Thing, Painting*  
 Schoen, Max, *The Realm of Art*  
 Scudder, Janet, *Modelling My Life*  
 Spaulding, Albert, *Rise to Follow*  
 Stein, Gertrude, *Picasso*  
 Stone, Irving, *Lust for Life*  
 Van Gogh, Vincent (ed. by Irving Stone), *Letters to Theo*  
 Van Loon, Hendrik, *Life and Times of Rembrandt*  
 Ventura, Lionello, *Painting and Painters*  
 Wright, Frank Lloyd, *When Democracy Builds; Architecture and Modern Life*  
 Wright, Richard, *Black Boy*
- FICTION
- Baker, Dorothy, *Young Man with a Horn*  
 Cather, Willa, *The Song of the Lark*  
 Clark, Walter Van Tilburg, *The City of Trembling Leaves*  
 Dane, Clemence, *Broome Stages*  
 Davenport, Marcia, *Of Lena Geyer*  
 Galsworthy, John, *A Novelist's Allegory*  
 Joyce, James, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
 Kennedy, Margaret, *The Constant Nymph*  
 Mann, Thomas, *Stories of Three Decades*  
 Maugham, Somerset, *The Moon and Sixpence*  
 Merejkowski, Dmitri, *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci*  
 Morgan, Charles, *Sparkenbroke*  
 Rolland, Romain, *Jean Christophe*  
 Woolf, Virginia, *Orlando*

## THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

1. What are the principles underlying the struggle for existence as outlined by Darwin? Discuss the following topics: causes of struggle; causes which check the tendency of the species to increase; the relation of structure to competition; the relation of environment to the struggle.

2. In what does the superiority of man to other animals lie, according to Bradley? What is the relationship between this superiority and the struggle for physical survival? What physical attributes has man lost in the process of evolution from lower planes of life? If man is to fail as a beast, what evidence does Bradley find in history that he may yet triumph as a god? What does he see as the great problem of the future? What is his suggested method for approaching it? *Suggestions for writing:* "Only fools and charlatans have panaceas for the varied distempers of humanity"; Man, the grub of a butterfly.

3. In your own words summarize the questions presented in *Modern Man Is Obsolete* that confront man in the new age of atomic energy. How may

the theory that war is instinctive with man be refuted? What major cause for wars is suggested? Enumerate some of the gaps man must bridge if he is to survive in this new world. What is the main test before him? What stimulus should enable him to meet this challenge? Summarize the two courses open to man as he prepares to make the decisions necessary for survival. Outline the specific problems that arise in considering the first course. What major obstacle to successful achievement does the author foresee? What specific arguments for a world government are presented? What difficulties does the author recognize, and what challenge do they present? In considering the second course open to man, comment on the reason for each one of the author's ironic recommendations, showing its relation to his major thesis. Summarize this thesis in your own words. *Suggestions for writing:* My answer to Mr. Cousins; First reactions to the atomic bomb; The fear of irrational death; Must man continue to be a "viciously competitive animal"? Have we the will to change? How does atomic energy affect the economic future of man? Industry's attitude toward the use of atomic energy; What institutions has the new discovery of atomic energy made obsolete? Government vs. Industry as controller of atomic energy; How does the new age affect educational problems? Great ideas that have been perverted.

4. *When H. G. Wells Split the Atom* presents a novelist's preview of 1945. Compare the implications of this presentation with the explicit statements of Mr. Cousins in *Modern Man Is Obsolete*. What are the main points of agreement? H. G. Wells has often been prophetic; try to find other illustrations of his prophecies that have been fulfilled. *Suggestions for writing:* Report on the famous Orson Welles broadcast of an adaptation of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*; If man's energies were freed for artistic creation; An age of scene shifting.

5. Why does Mr. Hooton call his first apology *defensive*, his second *penitential*? Summarize the physical adaptations that man has made in his evolution from his early ancestors. Explain: "Some doubting Thomases among our ape critics may regard as futile man's attempt to correlate with superior intelligence that vast malignancy which surmounts his spinal cord." Show how the three divisions under *Apology for Man's Behavior* illustrate the above comment. What illustrations can you bring to bear on the statement: "Language erects more barriers than bridges"? What defense can you offer against Mr. Hooton's charge that man's lack of judgment in controlling natural resources would disgust critics of higher intelligence? How would you answer his implied criticism of our regard for the weak, sickly, and constitutionally unfit in our society? Do you think Mr. Hooton takes sufficiently into account the role of education in a democracy? Write an answer to his *Apology* in which you present the case for man from any point of view which interests you. *Suggestions for writing:* Man as a talking animal; Do we dislike those who speak another language? Man's use of natural resources as a means of destruction; Have we learned to control water power? The denuda-

tion of our forests; Causes of soil erosion; Man is an economic fool; Children as economic parasites; Should medical skill be devoted to preservation of the "unfit"? Who determines the "unfit"? The old-age problem today. The concluding questions in the essay may well present interesting problems for long research papers.

6. In *Breaking the Vicious Circle* what is Menninger's explanation of the emotional misdirection which engulfs the world today? What two approaches to this problem does he criticize? What is his disagreement with the Marxians? What concrete program does he outline for harnessing and diminishing our aggressive drives? Trace the life history of the aggressive instinct. How does the author define sublimation? What is the relation of the conscience to aggression? *Suggestions for writing*: How I work off aggressions; Hostile structures; On probation; Good intentions; Self-absorption; The interests of self-preservation; Undoing evil; What is maturity? Sublimation as I view it; False morality; A sense of guilt; A careless misstep; The value of preventive medicine; The public weal; Watch your step! Accidents don't happen; Proneness to accidents; Human ills; Forms of self-destruction; Predetermination; A Cassandra I know; A vicious circle; Emotional misdirection; Economic determination; Succumbing to pessimism; Personality influences in childhood; Social orientation; Self-destructiveness; The power of hate; Parental attitudes.

7. In *Sex ex Machina* what evidence do you find in the first two paragraphs that Thurber is being satirical? Analyze the means by which Thurber achieves humor. Why does Thurber give Marvin Belt to the psychoanalysts? *Suggestions for writing*: So-called civilized man; A technological world; The relation of man to the machine; How to be happy in spite of everything; This mechanized existence; Merely in love; Confusing the average reader; Conditioned reflexes; The sedentary man; An experience that has left its mark.

8. In the introductory paragraph to *The High Plateaux of Asia* La Farge says, "Along with our forgetting the true nature of the years from ten to majority we seem to forget the power of their influence not only on general character but on many specific matters, reaching all through life." What experience of his early years does he see as most influential on his choice of a career? Trace this influence specifically. How does the author's early experience support Cousins' idea that there is no conflict between general courses which introduce the student to broad concepts and the more specialized, intensive courses? What need of the child does La Farge believe is met by courses that emphasize relationships and suggest causes and effects? Can you bring to bear on this point any evidence from your own experience? What is his idea of the relation between emotional and intellectual elements in the making of a scientist? Compare La Farge's picture of the scientist and his methods of work with the characterization of Dredge in *The Debt*. What evidence do you find in La Farge to suggest that Professor Lanfear (*The Debt*) would have welcomed Dredge's disproof of the older scientist's

hypotheses? How does La Farge justify the drudgery and attention to minute detail essential to scientific research? What does he see as the fundamental driving force of the scientist? What famous illustrations are offered? What are some of the personal sacrifices and the compensations in the life of a research scientist? What distinction does La Farge make between pseudo-scientists and real ones? Compare his conclusions as to the relation between the scientist and human progress with those of Cousins. *Suggestions for writing*: A book that has influenced me deeply; An illustration of the importance of chance; "Fiction dare not be as strange as truth"; La Farge's picture of the school boy is (or is not) typical; The "gentle pressure" of my parents regarding my career; A comparison of Dredge in *The Debt* and La Farge; A piece of research that opened a new world for me; The "hardship-and-danger boys"; Why should scientists and the public be cut off from each other?

9. Summarize the difficulties which confronted the Curies as they undertook their great experiment. Write character analyses of these two scientists, attempting to distinguish their individual qualities. Comment on the interweaving of narrative and descriptive detail throughout this account. What does each contribute? Show how the whole achieves a unity of impression that approaches the short story.

10. *The Campers at Kitty Hawk*, one of the biographical sketches interspersed in Dos Passos' novel *The Big Money*, illustrates another aspect of the scientific spirit in action. Compare the Wright brothers with other scientists presented in this section. Summarize the chief difficulties the Wrights encountered before achieving success. What is gained by Dos Passos' method of narration? Rewrite a passage in conventional paragraph and sentence form, and comment on what is gained or lost as a result. *Suggestions for writing*: A factual report on the Wright brothers; The price of success; The heroes pass out of the headlines; My first flight.

11. How does Dr. Gottlieb in *Arrowsmith* lend support to the argument of Mr. Harding regarding the scientist in commercial research?

12. *The Debt* presents to the reader the human drama frequently involved when a scientific hypothesis is overthrown. Who presumably is telling the story of *The Debt*, and what is achieved by this narrative device? What is the force of this characterization of the mature Dredge: "He does give the impression of being something out of his own laboratory: a delicate instrument that reveals wonders to the initiated, but is useless in an ordinary hand"? Contrast the implication of these lines with the characterization of the young Dredge. What is the value of letting us see how others feel about him? Why does Lanfear have so much respect for the young biologist? What statements of Lanfear himself suggest that he might agree or disagree with the stand later taken by Dredge? What qualities of the good scientist does Dredge represent? What popular attitude toward the findings of the scientist does Archie represent? What are the implications for science today in Dredge's characterization of Lanfear: "Men like him are the masters, not the servants,

of their theories. They respect an idea only as long as it's of use to them; when its usefulness ends they chuck it out"? What is the source of the quotation, "Just for a handful of silver he left us"? What do you think of Dredge's analysis of the debt he owed his master and his method of repaying it? What points of agreement can you find between the basic philosophy of this story and the ideas expressed by La Farge, Lewis, Cousins, and Curie? *Suggestions for writing:* Galen Dredge as I have known him; One whose silence is an interruption; One who was not afraid to wait; A defense of Archie; What should Dredge have done? Write your own conclusion to the story.

13. In the first act of *R. U. R.* what is the significance of Domin's comments on the best worker? Have they any implications for us in relation to the demands of labor today? What major contrasts are made between Robots and people? What is the meaning of Helena's confusion of the Robots with the officials? What type is represented by each of these men? What is the implication of Dr. Fabry's question: "Do you think that the soul first shows itself by a gnashing of teeth"? What is the meaning of Helena's wish to inspire an inner struggle? Why does Dr. Gall wish to introduce suffering among the Robots? Contrast his motive with that of Helena. Why do the scientists and officials not wish the Robots to acquire souls? Compare Domin's idea of the ultimate goal of their experiment with that of Busman. What point of view does Alquist represent? Comment on the irony of the fact that all men feel for Helena an emotion they would deny the Robots. Why is it appropriate that Domin should be the one to win Helena? What double meanings do you detect in the opening conversation of Act II? What is the position of Alquist? How does Nana's hostility to the scientific invention differ from the hostility of Helena? What modern counterpart can you find for Nana? What is the immediate motivation for Helena's destruction of the formula? Explain the effect of her act on the subsequent action of the play. Explain Hallemeier's comments on the timetable and discuss this concept in relation to the end of World War II and mankind's subsequent adjustment to a new age. Discuss the relevance of man's destruction by his own invention in *R. U. R.* to the world situation produced by the discovery of the secret of atomic energy. What are the evidences of Radius' difference from the other Robots, and what is the significance of this difference? Can you point any relationship between the ideas of *Modern Man Is Obsolete* and the idea expressed by Dr. Gall: "You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous; Man is really a survival"? Explain the psychological and philosophical implications of the role played by fear and hate in the action of this play. What forces made it impossible for men to control the production of Robots? Comment on modern parallels. Discuss the significance of Domin's proposed solution in the manufacture of National Robots of a different color and language. What parallels to his point of view do you find in our world? In Act III analyze the comments of the various individuals during the final attack, showing how each represents a



perennial attitude in the face of imminent revolutionary change. What may be considered the voice of the dramatist himself? Comment on Helena's statement, "I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human." Interpret Domin's answer, "Nobody can hate man more than man." What relation has Busman's proposed solution to the "appeasement" principle of modern politicians? What contemporary parallels do you find for Fabry's solution of seeking a place of refuge and reconquering the world in a few hundred years? Why is Alquist alone spared by the Robots? Discuss the meaning of the Epilogue in terms of its possible implications for the future of our civilization. *Suggestions for writing:* Contemporary parallels with *R. U. R.*; Analysis of Domin, Alquist, Busman, Gall, Hallemeier, Fabry, commenting on modern prototypes; Comparison of *R. U. R.* with Huxley's *Brave New World*; Would a world freed from suffering and work be a Utopia? The meaning of the revolt of the Robots.

14. In *No More of the Moon* a modern poet renounces an age-old subject of poetry. Why? It would be interesting to make a collection of poems about the moon to discover what poets have formerly felt and expressed on this subject. Does the scientific approach to nature necessarily destroy the possibility of an aesthetic or emotional approach?

15. Study *The Express* and *The Landscape near an Aerodrome* in relation to Engle's study, *Poetry in a Machine Age*. Comment on the effectiveness of the imagery and its symbolism in a short paper.

16. Compare the lines from Tennyson which show the influence of the theory of evolution with those of Aldous Huxley. What significance do you find in the fact that Huxley is the grandson of T. H. Huxley, Darwin's "bulldog"?

### Suggestions for Further Reading

#### ESSAYS, CRITICISM AND BIOGRAPHY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Adler, Mortimer, <i>What Man Has Made of Man</i>                          | Geddes, Donald Porter, et al., <i>The Atomic Age Opens</i>  |
| Beers, Clifford, <i>A Mind That Found Itself</i>                          | Gill, Henry V., <i>Fact and Fiction in Modern Science</i>   |
| Bliven, Bruce, <i>The Men Who Make the Future</i>                         | Gray, George W., <i>The Advancing Front of Science; The Advancing Front of Medicine</i>                         |
| Brill, A. A., ed., <i>Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud</i>                 | Haldane, J. B. S., <i>Possible Worlds</i>   |
| Curie, Eve, <i>Madame Curie</i>   | Heiser, Victor, <i>An American Doctor's Odyssey</i>   |
| De Kruif, Paul, <i>Hunger Fighters; Microbe Hunters; The Male Hormone</i> | Hogben, Lancelot, <i>Science for the Citizen</i>  |
| Eddington, A. S., <i>The Nature of the Physical World</i>                 | Hooton, E. A., <i>Ben, Apes, and Morons; Young Man, You Are Normal; Why Men Behave Like Apes and Vice Versa</i> |
| Fabre, Henri, <i>Social Life in the Insect World; The Mason Bees</i>      | Howells, W. H., <i>Mankind So Far</i>   |
| Gamow, George, <i>Mr. Tomkins Explores the Atom</i>                       | Huxley, Julian, <i>Man Stands Alone</i>   |

Jaffe, Bernard, *Men of Science in America*  
 Jeans, Sir James, *The Mysterious Universe*  
 Kaempffert, Waldemar, *Science Today and Tomorrow*

Linton, Ralph, *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*

Mead, Margaret, *Coming of Age in Samoa; And Keep Your Powder Dry*

Menninger, Karl, *The Human Mind; Man against Himself; Love against Hate*

Millikan, Robert, *Science and Life*

Moulton, Forest R., *The Autobiography of Science*

Munthe, Axel, *The Story of San Michele*

Newman, J. H., *Christianity and Science*

Ratcliff, J. D., *Yellow Magic: The Story of Penicillin*

Rukeyser, Muriel, *Willard Gibbs*

Vallery-Radot, René, *Life of Pasteur*

Whitehead, Alfred N., *Science and the Modern World*

Zinsser, Hans, *As I Remember Him; Rats, Lice and History*

#### FICTION

Brown, Carlton, *Brainstorm*

Capek, Karel, *The Absolute at Large*

Huxley, Aldous, *The Young Archimedes; Brave New World*

Lewis, Sinclair, *Arrowsmith*

Wells, H. G., *Tono-Bungay; The War of the Worlds; The Shape of Things to Come; The Time Machine*

#### DRAMA

Capek, Karel, *The Power and the Glory*

Howard, Sidney, *Yellow Jack*

Kingsley, Sidney, *Men in White*

Shaw, G. B., *Back to Methusaleh*

## THE APPEAL OF RELIGION

1. What have been some of the changes in the thinking of modern man which prompt Fosdick to ask: *Are Religious People Fooling Themselves?* What, according to Fosdick, is the psychologist's interpretation of religion? To what extent does he agree with this interpretation? To what premise concerning the cosmos does Fosdick attribute the "psychological" interpretation of religion? What arguments does he offer in challenging this premise? Summarize in a single sentence the attitude toward man and the universe on which his refutation is based. What are the three elements required for a religion which is not illusion? What does Fosdick mean when he alludes to using God as a *deus ex machina*? *Suggestions for writing:* Defenders of the faith; Religion as wish-fulfillment; Making life more livable; Self-renunciation; A religion of illusion; Man is the astronomer; Mental legerdemain; An alien in this world; Egocentric religion; Looking for sugar-plums in the home of the infinite; Magic carpets; Re-orienting ourselves; My defense mechanisms; A travesty on religion.

2. What major criticism does Mrs. Buck advance in her essay, *Can the Church Be Religious?* Can you give illustrations to support or refute her point of view? What are the basic doctrines which she believes the church should represent? How are they denied in the practice of many church members? Evaluate the program she suggests. What does she see as the supreme tragedy of our lives, and what might the church do about it? Distinguish between religion as "refuge" and religion as a "return to the source." What can we do to make real the Christian's professed belief in brotherhood? Where are our greatest failures at present? What hope for the future does

Mrs. Buck offer? Is it being realized? *Suggestions for writing:* How I judge religion; The most religious person I know; A church that practices what it preaches; The role of the church in the last war; Measuring religion by growth in membership; If we really believed in the brotherhood of man; Religion as escape or renewal; The denial of brotherhood as an economic weapon; What can we do on our campus to promote brotherhood among all groups and races?

3. If the father in *My Father's Religion* reminds you of any one you know, present a characterization of this individual. Portray him through showing him in action in a number of specific situations. Try indirectly to reveal your own attitude toward the character.

4. In the light of your reading of Darwin, evaluate Chesterton's criticism of the popular social application of Darwinism. In what way does reliance on science fail to take the place of religion in our world? What does Chesterton see as the individual and social effects of scepticism? Can you find specific evidences of the return to religion heralded by Chesterton?

5. Edward Aswell, editor of Thomas Wolfe's late book, *The Hills Beyond*, in which *God's Lonely Man* is included, says that this selection is further proof that Thomas Wolfe was a deeply religious man in the unconventional but truest sense of the word. What evidence do you find in this piece to support this point of view? Why does Wolfe feel particularly qualified to write on loneliness? Why is loneliness conducive to self-doubt? What is Wolfe's interpretation of the tragic writer? *Suggestions for writing:* A solitary life; Human loneliness; "The surest cure for vanity is loneliness"; Self-doubt; Going nowhere in a hurry; Youthful hopes; The promise of new beginnings; Secure in himself; The structure of my life; The essence of human tragedy; The mystery of the universe; The brotherhood of man; The old avowals.

6. What does Russell suggest as the first step in finding a solution to the problem of adjustment to the world in which we live? How adequate to the problem which he presents does his solution seem to you? Discuss his tragic view of life in relation to Krutch's definition of tragedy. What contemporary events attest to the truth of this statement: "The worship of Force, to which Carlyle and Nietzsche and the creed of Militarism have accustomed us, is the result of failure to maintain our own ideals against a hostile universe; it is itself a prostrate submission to evil, a sacrifice of our best to Moloch"? Trace Newman's argument for the superiority of faith to science and logic. How does he suggest that the study of nature may lead one to religious faith?

7. The author of *Mr. Onion* has stated that he was motivated to write the story as a protest against the prevailing cynicism of the twenties. How would you describe the method he uses and to what extent does he succeed in his purpose? What did Mr. Onion represent to Jackie, to his parents? What new evaluation of life is made by Jackie's parents after the crisis has passed?

*Suggestions for writing:* Household duties; Our generation; Successful at living; The old bugaboos; Papa Freud as drum major; Making a virtue of vice; The modern credo; A lost link in the chain; A salve to the conscience; Pulling up stakes; The trouble is at the center; Emotional barometers; Man searching.

8. Clara Laidlaw says of *The Little Black Boys* that she intended it to be a story of the spiritual life of man and that the race problem was only an incidental one: "The real problem was one of our common stake in humanity, of our reaching out to others in sympathy and love while all the time our pitiful isolation, one from the other, keeps us from ever really touching another life." Consider the story in the light of this statement. What would have been gained or lost had the children been white? What details bring out the social background and the discrimination the boys have experienced? What impression do you obtain of their mother before she appears? Is your impression later corroborated or revised? What is the role of the church in this story, and how is Mrs. Buck's criticism vindicated? Discuss the effectiveness of the introduction of Blake's poem. Find out what you can about Blake and his ideas. Characterize Miss Carey. Would the story be more or less effective if told by someone else? Do you think the implicit social criticism more or less effective than explicit criticism? Discuss this problem, comparing the story with others that deal with racial prejudice. *Suggestions for writing:* "The other children shunned them"; The influence of the home in developing race prejudice; How can we combat prejudice? Pity is not enough; Reaching out to others.

9. List illustrations of the qualities of God expressed in the image of animals in the two poems of Blake. Why should Blake's definition of the qualities of God seem revolutionary in his day and yet be generally acceptable today?

10. What is the poet of *The Hound of Heaven* searching for, and where does he look in vain? What view of nature do you find in this poem? Study the imagery and comment on its symbolism. How does the movement of the verse suggest pursuit? Compare the concept of God in this poem with that in *Eye-Witness*.

11. Compare the religious doubts suggested in *The Collar*, *Hymn to God the Father*, and the sonnet of G. M. Hopkins. Compare the religious attitude of these poets with that of Thompson in *The Hound of Heaven*.

12. Comment on *The Preacher* as an exposition of the idea that God is a God of love rather than a God of wrath. Write a characterization of a preacher whom you know.

13. Compare the Brontë and Whitman selections as they suggest the role the individual must play in achieving an affirmative view of life.

14. Relate the philosophy of *God-Forgotten* to Hardy's *Satires of Circumstance* and to any novel of his that you have read.

15. Evaluate in your own mind the theistic, mystic, humanistic, and agnostic approaches to religion which you have encountered in this section. Write a critical paper defending the point of view most convincing to you. Consult the bibliography for suggestive material. Write an autobiographical essay tracing the development of your religious convictions.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

#### ESSAYS, CRITICISM AND BIOGRAPHY

Browne, Lewis, *This Believing World*  
 Chase, Mary Ellen, *The Bible and the Common Reader*  
 Chesterton, Gilbert K., *Autobiography*  
 Edman, Irwin, *The Contemporary and His Soul*  
 Fosdick, Harry Emerson, *As I See Religion; Adventurous Religion; A Great Time to Be Alive*  
 Frazer, James G., *The Golden Bough*  
 Holmes, John Haynes, *Rethinking Religion*  
 Kagawa, Toyohiko, *Meditations*  
 Link, Henry C., *The Return to Religion*  
 Maritain, Jacques, *True Humanism*  
 Newman, John Henry, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*  
 Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*  
 Spence, Hartzell, *One Foot in Heaven*  
 Sperry, Willard L., *Religion in the Post-war World*  
 Temple, William, *The Church Looks Forward*  
 Wilson, S. L., *The Theology of Modern Literature*

#### FICTION

Asch, Sholem, *The Apostle; The Nazarene*  
 Bojer, Johann, *The Great Hunger; The New Temple*  
 Burnett, Whit, (ed.) *The Seas of God*  
 Cather, Willa, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*

Dostoevski, Feodor, *The Brothers Karamazov; Crime and Punishment*  
 Eliot, George, *Adam Bede; Romola*  
 France, Anatole, *Thaïs; The Procurator of Judea*  
 Hauptmann, Gerhardt, *The Fool in Christ*  
 Huxley, Aldous, *Eyeless in Gaza; After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*  
 Lagerlof, Selma, *Jerusalem; Christ Legends*  
 Lewis, Sinclair, *Ehner Gantry*  
 Rolvaag, Ole, *Their Father's God*  
 Tolstoi, Leo, *Resurrection*  
 Trollope, Anthony, *Barchester Towers*  
 Undset, Sigrid, *The Burning Bush*  
 Walpole, Hugh, *The Cathedral*  
 Werfel, Franz, *The Song of Bernadette; The Pure in Heart*  
 White, Helen C., *Not Built with Hands; A Watch in the Night*  
 Wilder, Thornton, *Heaven's My Destination*

#### DRAMA

Björnson, Björnsterne, *Beyond Human Power*  
 Carroll, Paul Vincent, *Shadow and Substance; The White Steed*  
 Connelly, Marc, *The Green Pastures*  
 Grothers, Rachel, *Susan and God*  
 Ferris, Walter, *Death Takes a Holiday*  
 Ibsen, Henrik, *Brand*  
 O'Neill, Eugene, *Days without End; Lazarus Laughed*  
 Shaw, G. B., *Saint Joan*  
 Wilder, Thornton, *Our Town*

### THE GOOD LIFE

1. What concrete illustrations does Barbellion offer in support of his thesis that "no fact, no piece of information about this world, is greater or less than another, but that all are equal as the angels"? To what extent does this conviction lead him to the well-balanced life, to what extent to a life of

excesses? Discuss the relative components of romanticism and realism, of selfishness and altruism, in his view of life. *Suggestions for writing:* While I slept; A tiny joy; Human freightage; Looping the loop; Living on the heights; Wherever I hitch my wagon; Beauty in the ugly; Hiding away from life; And so to bed; A slice of life; Sanctuaries; Bravura; Strange antitheses; Devoted slave; Things I ought to scowl upon.

2. Sum up Stevenson's arguments which give support to the thesis that "extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality, and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity." *Suggestions for writing:* A defense of busyness; We grow weary when idle; Peering into a mirror; Little time for thoughts; Hours of truantry; Lackluster periods; Odds and ends; Arid knowledge; The art of living; Byroads; Success in life; Lukewarm; Vanities; A recluse I know.

3. In *The Sailor and the Life of the Spirit* what values were affirmed by the sailor? How should you summarize his attitudes toward life? Develop the thesis that there is only one community, that of the mind. *Suggestions for writing:* Professorial absent-mindedness; The letter killeth; Knocking about the country; The good life; No particular ambitions; The state of the world; Ultimate things; The self-educated man; Masochism thinly disguised; A life worth living; Self-justification; Content in the sun; Lost in reflection; A good place to be oneself; Keeping away from distractions; The contemplative life; The community of the mind; Characterization of a veteran who has returned to the campus.

4. In *The Men* what is Saint-Exupéry's purpose in presenting the two pilots? In each characterization analyze the qualities of the men and discuss the relation between these specific qualities and the author's philosophical attitudes. Study the narrative and descriptive details that make this account vivid. According to Saint-Exupéry what is the most fundamental problem in achieving happiness? What relation do you see between his ideas on human relationships and those of Brown in *The Return to Love*? In the second episode what does the author gain by addressing Guillaumet as he tells his story? What was the supreme temptation for Guillaumet and what was his triumph? Compare this study of man's suffering and spiritual victory with the ideas expressed in the conclusion of Russell's *A Free Man's Worship*. Why does the author find these words of Guillaumet especially significant: "I swear that what I went through, no animal would have gone through"? Relate this idea to the ideas developed by Hooton or Bradley concerning man's inferiority to the animals. What constitutes man's moral greatness? How does the author distinguish between the attitude toward death of a courageous man and that of one who has contempt for death but lacks true dignity? How does the author develop the idea of work as a creative process and an assumption of responsibility toward others? *Suggestions for writing:* A comparison of Ernie Pyle's *Brave Men* and the heroes of Saint-Exupéry;

Comradeship in danger; Reliving a dangerous experience; "True riches cannot be bought"; "Human relations must be created"; "Once men are caught up in an event, they cease to be afraid"; "To be a man is to be responsible."

5. Mr. Mumford says that a living philosophy is "more than the sum of one's beliefs, judgments, standards, axioms, put together in an orderly system; it is rather a resolution of one's abstract plan of living with the circumstances and emergencies of actual existence." To what extent does his philosophy approximate this definition? Compare his conclusions with those of Bertrand Russell. What are the essential distinctions between his way of life and that of Stevenson?

6. In *What Time the Good Life* how does Barzun explain Fitzgerald's emphasis on his two youthful disappointments? What might be the relation between these experiences and his later crack-up? What twofold test must satisfactory achievement meet? How may war enable the individual to find this satisfaction? What factors in modern warfare make it difficult for the individual to find personal satisfaction? What did William James mean by the "moral equivalent of war"? What moral equivalents does modern life offer? Discuss the personal and social values to be found in several possible activities. What is the role of tradition in establishing channels for ability and self-fulfillment? In what ways may tradition prove inadequate in the world of today? What personal and social goals might help in the building of new and meaningful cultural forms? What might be the role of the man of letters in this task? *Suggestions for writing:* A report on F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Crack-up*; A report on *The Great Gatsby*; The satisfaction of self-sacrifice; The importance of work; Is the restlessness of youth today evidence of a search for significant personal and social goals? Do we "live to consume"? Do service clubs reflect a need to give meaning to the pursuit of gain? The artist and society.

7. What qualities of Lincoln noted by Sandburg might illustrate Wordsworth's *The Happy Warrior*? What physical characteristics which Sandburg introduces are especially significant in suggesting character? Find illustrations of the effective use of contrast in descriptive detail and traits of character.

8. John Reed's *Almost Thirty* treats of a quest for certainty rather than of any achievement of it. What circumstances in his background and training contributed to his restlessness and uncertainty? What values does he affirm? *Suggestions for writing:* Testing things; Looking back; Drifting; Feeding on fantasy; The orgy of books; Apartment hotel; In our attic; How to meet people; Full of meaning.

9. *Brave Man* effectively illustrates the good life in action. Analyze the qualities of Ernie Pyle that made him "democracy's perfect symbol in a democratic war." What qualities do you think are representative of the brave men he tells about; what qualities are especially characteristic of Ernie Pyle? *Suggestions for writing:* A personality for whom age is no barrier; One who

insists on sharing the burden; The typewriter as a weapon; The local boy makes good; Bothered by fame; A perfect tribute.

10. See what you can discover about the life of Daniel Webster which would lend support to Mr. Benét's characterization of him. Do you find any evidence of the truth of the devil's prophecy? Comment on the suitability of the informal narrative style to the elements of folklore and superstition, to the story, and to its homely realism in portrayal of the Yankee character and the New England setting. What comparisons might be made between the philosophy of life expressed by Daniel Webster in his speech and some of the ideas in Russell's *A Free Man's Worship*? What elements of social criticism do you find in addition to the personal philosophy? *Suggestions for writing*: An explanation of the change in Daniel Webster; Daniel Webster's idea of the good life; "The things that make a country a country"; A personal interview with the devil.

11. What view of the good life does *The Bet* exemplify? What other views does it challenge? Do you find the lawyer's conclusions as to true and false values in life convincing? Explain your position in a brief paper. Comment on the effectiveness of the narrative method here, noting the shifts in time, the use of sensuous descriptive detail, means of concentration, use of conversation, handling of climax, and irony. *Suggestions for writing*: Write a conclusion to the story as you would have it, or follow the life of the lawyer after this experience. Imagine a conversation in which the banker tells his story the next morning.

12. What details in *The Portable Phonograph* acquaint you with the situation of the four men before you are introduced to them? What do you learn of the inner life of each of them? What values have they in common? *Suggestions for writing*: Those who will come after us; Mechanical fools; Books that keep the soul alive; They can't last forever; A man can stand anything; No earthly good; An attitude of worship.

13. What two ideals of the best way of life are contrasted in Stuart's *His Autumn-Colored Face*? Compare the picture of Ulysses and his son in Tennyson's poem.

14. Although Elinor Wylie calls her poem a *Nonsense Rhyme*, what rather serious contrasting views of life does the mocking title veil? *Suggestions for writing*: The middle mind; The smooth ambiguous smile; The enthusiast; All or nothing.

15. Why does Yeats not covet great beauty for his daughter? Summarize and evaluate the good things he wishes for her. What is his view of the "opinionated" woman? Compare the woman he admires with the man in Wordsworth's *The Happy Warrior*. An interesting report might be given comparing another poet's wishes for his son in *Frost at Midnight* by Coleridge. *Suggestions for writing*: The calamity of beauty; The power of a "glad kindness"; The art of quarreling in merriment; A wish for my son (or daughter).



16. What is the anomaly in the character of Flammonde and what clue to its solution can you suggest? *Suggestions for writing:* I have known Flammonde; Broken links of destiny; A flash of unforeseen remembrance; We look beyond horizons.

17. Which of the attitudes toward life do you find more acceptable, that of Housman or that of Maschfield? Write a character sketch in which you present a possible speaker for either philosophy or a conversation between the two.

18. The rewards, responsibilities, and limitations of the intellectual life form the dominant theme of Dyer, Taggard, and Pope. Analyze these specific elements as represented in the three poems; comment on what the poems have in common and how they differ. To what extent do these authors consider that the life of the mind must also be a life of action? Compare the thought in the passage from Pope with the famous speech of Hamlet beginning "What a piece of work is man."

19. Study the balance between the life of thought and the life of action in *Ulysses* and *The Happy Warrior*. To what extent might the story of Ulysses, the adventurer, be considered a fable of the aspiring mind eager for new experience? What is the effect of the background of the sea in this poem? How does the introduction of Telemachus accentuate the main theme? Contrast the philosophy of Ulysses in this poem with that of his men as presented in *The Lotus-Eaters*. Read Homer's *Odyssey* to see if you can find support for this characterization of Ulysses (Odysseus) and write an essay on your discoveries.

20. In what way might *Rabbi Ben Ezra* be considered an answer to the philosophy of Herrick's *To the Virgins*? Why is youth considered best in Herrick's poem, age in Browning's? Can you find in Browning's poem praise of the complete life, embodying physical, intellectual, and spiritual values? Trace each theme through the successive stanzas. *Suggestions for writing:* My mind a kingdom; Glory, jest and riddle; Proper study of mankind; Rising by open means; Where ignorant armies clash; The eternal note of sadness; Youth against age; Envy of the great is the key to the debunking biography; The best is yet to be; I prize the doubt; Success in failure.

21. How are the claims of the life of action and intellect united in *Speech to the Detractors*? How are the claims of the common man and the hero reconciled?

22. That the renunciation of personal desires and ambitions for public duty represents for Milton an aspect of the "good life" is suggested in his two sonnets. Relate the theme to the facts of his life in a brief investigative paper.

23. Study the symbolism of the sea as representative of modern life in *Dover Beach*. What is the quest of the speaker here, and what is his answer? Comment on MacLeish's poem as an answer to Arnold's. Which do you consider the more affirmative and hopeful assertion of life's values?

24. Compare the theme of *Ulysses* with *Song of the Open Road*. What

does Whitman add that is not evident in Tennyson? In your own words summarize the joys of the full life praised by Whitman. Does he omit anything you consider important? Read Emerson's *Self-Reliance* for possible influences of his thought on Whitman. Write a paper on your discoveries. Compare this poem with Whitman's *Pioneers! O Pioneers!*

25. If you think the imaginary conversation of *To You, Endless Announcements* establishes the spiritual kinship of Whitman and Saroyan, analyze their points of similarity in philosophy and expression. It would be interesting to engage in further research on this problem and report your conclusions in a paper. What do you think is the purpose of the author in presenting the comparison in this form? Does it add to or detract from the stature of Saroyan as creative artist?

26. Analyze the character of Prufrock, attempting to discover why his relationships with other people leave him with a sense of overwhelming loneliness and frustration. In what lines do you find the most explicit clues to his character? Find evidence that he is criticizing not only himself but his entire social milieu. What details suggest the social background? What figures and descriptive details suggest the influence of a machine age? Read Engle's *Poetry in a Machine Age* for helpful suggestions. How might modern theories of science throw light on the lines: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas"? Find instances in T. S. Eliot of the linking of the intense and trivial, the beautiful and ugly, the elevated and the banal. It has been said that Eliot writes in the spirit of Browning but with far different intention. Test the validity of this statement by a study of the poems and personalities of both authors. *Suggestions for writing:* Myself when I am old; On measuring out my life with coffee spoons; Conversations over the tea table; Half-deserted streets; Restless nights; A tedious argument; Preparing a face to meet the faces that you meet; Indecisions; I am not Prince Hamlet; A bit obtuse; Almost the fool; I grow old; I am not a prophet; Do I dare? Time to turn back; I was afraid; Visitors in an art gallery.

27. *The World in Your Hand* is part of a long poem which Theodore Spencer delivered at the 166th Anniversary of the founding of the College of William and Mary. Compare Spencer's ideas on the language and subject matter of poetry with the ideas of Wordsworth. Do you find any points of comparison with the ideas of Whitman in *There Was a Child Went Forth*? What corroboration of the ideas in the fifth stanza is to be found in the selection from Menninger's *Love against Hate*? If you are reminded in the concluding stanzas of the philosophy embodied in *The Little Black Boys*, explain the points of agreement. What affirmation of faith in the meaning and value of life do you find in this poem that might answer the negative attitudes expressed in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*? Summarize the basic philosophy of the poem in your own words. *Suggestions for writing:* Write a long paper presenting your ideas of the good life. Consider the selections

in the several areas of experience and show how your ideas have been confirmed or changed by your reading and thinking.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

#### ESSAYS, CRITICISM AND BIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Sherwood, *Memoirs*  
 Baker, Ray Stannard, *An American Chronicle*  
 Barton, Betsy, *And Now to Live Again*  
 Bentley, Eric Russell, *A Century of Hero Worship*  
 Durant, Will, *The Story of Philosophy; Transition*  
 Edman, Irwin, *Philosopher's Holiday; Richard Kane Looks at Life*  
 Einstein, Albert, et al., *Living Philosophies*  
 Erskine, John, *The Complete Life*  
 Fadiman, Clifton (ed.), *I Believe*  
 Fosdick, Harry Emerson, *On Being A Real Person; On Living under Tension*  
 Hawkrigde, E. K., *The Wisdom Tree*  
 Huxley, Aldous, *Ends and Means; Perennial Philosophy*  
 Joad, C. F. M., *The Adventures of a Young Soldier in Search of a Better World*  
 Maritain, Jacques, *An Introduction to Philosophy*  
 Morgan, Charles, *Reflections in a Mirror*  
 Norris, George W., *Fighting Liberal*  
 Pyle, Ernie, *Brave Men*  
 Sugrue, Thomas, *There Is a River*  
 Wells, H. G., *Experiment in Autobiography*  
 Werfel, Franz, *Between Heaven and Earth*  
 Young, Marguerite, *Angel in the Forest*
- FICTION
- Brittain, Vera, *Account Rendered*
- Dostoevski, Feodor, *Crime and Punishment*  
 Fisher, Dorothy Canfield, *Seasoned Timber*  
 Gunn, Neil, *Man Goes Alone*  
 Huxley, Aldous, *Time Must Have a Stop*  
 Joyce, James, *Ulysses*  
 Mann, Thomas, *The Magic Mountain*  
 Maugham, Somerset, *The Razor's Edge*  
 Porter, Katharine Anne, *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories*  
 Proust, Marcel, *Remembrance of Things Past*  
 Richardson, Dorothy, *Pilgrimage*  
 Robertson, E. Arnot, *The Signpost*  
 Rolland, Romain, *Jean Christophe*  
 Santayana, George, *The Last Puritan*  
 Sinclair, May, *Mary Olivier*  
 Walpole, Hugh, *Fortitude; The Dark Forest*  
 Wasserman, Jacob, *The World's Illusion*  
 Woolf, Virginia, *To the Lighthouse*  
 Wylie, Philip, *Night unto Night*
- DRAMA
- Barry, Philip, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*  
 Galsworthy, John, *Escape*  
 Hart, Moss and Kaufman, George S., *You Can't Take It with You*  
 Ibsen, Henrik, *Peer Gynt; The Master Builder*  
 Osborn, Paul, *On Borrowed Time*  
 Saroyan, William, *The Time of Your Life*  
 Sherwood, Robert, *Abraham Lincoln; The Petrified Forest*  
 Vane, Sutton, *Outward Bound*

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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CONRAD AIKEN (1889- ), poet, novelist, and short story writer, composed his first poem at the age of nine. His poetry has been influenced by modern science, especially by the concepts of Freud, James, and Bergson. It is marked by its musical qualities. His novels, *Blue Voyage* and *Conversation*, and his short stories have also brought him wide recognition here and abroad.

MAXWELL ANDERSON (1888- ), after serving as a college teacher and journalist, has devoted himself to writing. Among his best known plays are *Winterset*, *Both Your Houses*, *Mary of Scotland*, *Elizabeth the Queen*, *The Wingless Victory* and *Key Largo*.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON (1876-1941) was a native of Ohio, a state which is frequently the background of his stories. He had broad experience in many aspects of American life—on farm, in factory, in advertising business—before he decided to become a writer. His inner conflicts he described in his *A Story Teller's Story*, *Memoirs*, and *Winesburg, Ohio*. *Many Marriages* and *The Triumph of the Egg* are also among his best known works of fiction.

W. N. P. BARBELLION (1890-1917) was the son of a newspaper reporter in a small Devonshire town. At the age of 13 he started his diary, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*, in which he records his fight with disease, poverty, and all the stupidities of the world.

JACQUES BARZUN (1907- ) was born in Paris, where he received his early education. He came to America when a child and is now Associate Professor of History in Columbia University. He is the author of many books, of which *Race*, *A Study in Modern Superstition*; *Of Hunan Freedom*; *Darwin, Marx, Wagner*; and *Teacher in America* are the best known.

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON (1832-1910), a Norwegian novelist, dramatist, and poet, was also a revolutionary leader and social reformer. His name lives in the literature of Europe by virtue of his realistic studies of heredity and other social problems and is immortal in his own country by virtue of his noble and patriotic lyric verse.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT (1898-1943) was notable as a short story writer and poet. Among his published works are *John Brown's Body*, which won the Pulitzer prize in 1928, *Ballads and Poems* and several volumes of short stories.

MORRIS BISHOP (1893- ) is a professor of Romance languages at Cornell University. He is the author of a number of books and has contributed frequently to the *New Yorker* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827) was an English mystical poet and artist whose revolutionary ideas have been more influential on later writers than they were on his contemporaries. He anticipates Freud in his subtle psychology, and modern social poets in his vision of an era of brotherhood and love. *Songs of Innocence* and

*Songs of Experience* present opposing states of the human soul with a simplicity that is really extreme sublimity. Many of his poems are protests against social evils.

JOHN HODGDON BRADLEY (1898- ), a professor since 1929 at the University of Southern California, is also a geologist and author. Among his published works are *The Earth and Its History*, *Parade of the Living*, *Autobiography of Earth*, and *Patterns of Survival*.

EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848), one of three sisters to contribute to the literature of the Victorian Age, is chiefly known for her powerful novel, *Wuthering Heights*. She was the only member of her family to write notable poetry as well as fiction.

RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915), an English poet, is chiefly notable for his poems on war, love, and the beauties of the English countryside. A member of the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, he died in Gallipoli and was buried there.

JOHN MASON BROWN (1900- ) is a well-known dramatic critic and author, now editor of a column of dramatic criticism in *The Saturday Review of Literature*. During the war he was an official broadcaster to the troopships in the Sicilian campaign. His books, *To All Hands* and *Many a Watchful Night*, are a vivid record of his war experience.

ROLLO WALTER BROWN (1880- ) was born in Ohio and has taught English at Harvard. He has been, in the last twenty years, a lecturer and free-lance writer, contributing to many periodicals. Among his best known books are *The Creative Spirit—An Inquiry into American Life and Lonely Americans*.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861) was an English poet, wife of Robert Browning, for whom she wrote her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889) wrote a number of long poems and poetic dramas, but he is best known for his concentrated dramatic monologues in which a character reveals himself at a significant moment. His is an affirmative philosophy of life, reflecting the poet's intellectual vigor and zest for living.

PEARL BUCK (1892- ), a Nobel prize winner in 1938 in recognition of her novel *The Good Earth*, has written also *Sons*, *A House Divided*, *The Exile*, *The Mother*, *Fighting Angel*, and *The Patriot*.

DANA BURNETT (1888- ) has written several plays and contributed to a variety of magazines.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796), Scotch poet, is recognized as one of the greatest love poets and song writers of all time. Himself a man of humble birth, he had a deep sympathy with the poor, a passionate love of liberty, and a hatred of injustice and hypocrisy, all of which find expression in his ballads and satires.

LORD BYRON (George Gordon Byron) (1788-1824) has exerted great influence on poetry because of the vigor of his narrative, the grandeur of his style, and the power of his satire. It is perhaps as the poet of the epic satire *Don Juan*, ridiculing British hypocrisy and exposing social corruption, that he will have his most enduring fame. He was a life-long devotee of liberty and died in Greece, where he had gone to defend Greek freedom.

KAREL CAPEK (1890-1938) was born in northern Bohemia and became known as an outstanding Czechoslovakian poet, short story writer, and playwright. R. U. R. was called by Heywood Brown "an extraordinary searching study of the nature of

human life and human society." His other plays include *The Robber*, *The World We Live In*, and *The Power and the Glory*. He was a close friend of President Masaryk and identified with the development of democracy in Czechoslovakia. Grief over the betrayal of his country was doubtless a precipitating factor in his early death.

WILLA CATHER (1876- ), formerly an editor of *McClure's Magazine*, is one of America's most highly regarded writers of fiction. Her best known works are *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, *Shadows on the Rock*, *Obscure Destinies*, *The Song of the Lark*, *O Pioneers*, and *The Professor's House*.

ANTON CHEKHOV (1860-1904), great Russian short story writer, was the son of a freed serf in South Russia. Educated for medicine at the University of Moscow, he never practiced except once during a cholera plague. His highly concentrated and powerful stories have exerted great influence on the modern short story. They are marked by irony, compassion for suffering and poverty, and emotional restraint. He also wrote a number of plays, including *The Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *Three Sisters*.

G. K. CHESTERTON (1874-1936) is a well-known English essayist, novelist, dramatist, and poet. Among his published works are *Orthodoxy*, *Heretics*, *What Is Wrong with the World*, *What I Saw in America*, and *The Everlasting Man*.

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK (1909- ) was born in Maine but has spent most of his life in Nevada, where he lives on a ranch. Author of a number of short stories, he has written two novels: *The Ox Bow Incident* and *The City of Trembling Leaves*.

DAVID COHN (1896- ) is a journalist, interpreter, and critic of various phases of American life. In *God Shakes Creation* he has made a study of Negro life. In *Love in America* he makes stimulating analyses of our social mores and attitudes.

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1924), an English novelist of Polish parentage, was a sailor as well as a writer about the sea. Among his most significant novels are *Almayer's Folly*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Lord Jim*, *Typhoon*, and *Nostromo*.

NORMAN COUSINS (1912- ) is editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*. He was an editor for the Office of War Information during the war. His editorial *Modern Man Is Obsolete* has attracted wide attention as one of the best expressions of the challenge science offers to man's spiritual and intellectual growth if civilization is to continue. His books include *The Good Inheritance* and *The Democratic Chance*. The anthologies he has edited are *A Treasury of Democracy* and *An Anthology of the Poetry of Democracy*.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800), the author of poems of Nature and of simple domestic life. Much of his life was clouded by insanity. He spent many years in the household of Morley and Mary Unwin. To the latter he became utterly devoted. In 1792 she suffered a paralytic stroke which made her a hopeless invalid. This calamity was the occasion of the poem *To Mary Unwin*. Cowper's most famous works, besides the above, are *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*, a humorous effusion, and *The Task*, a long blank-verse poem.

THOMAS CRAVEN (1889- ) has been a pioneer in bringing art into the consciousness of the American public. He is author of *Men of Art*, *Modern Art*, and the editor of *A Treasury of American Prints*.

EVE CURIE (1904- ), daughter of the late Marie Curie and Pierre Curie, discoverers of radium, has recently received public attention through her lectures and especially through her biography of her mother, *The Life of Marie Curie*.

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office worker, salesman, jewelry clerk, agent for a tobacco company, shipping clerk in an electrotype foundry, and mail sorter in a post office. His stories and sketches have appeared in *The Dial*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The American Mercury*, and *The New Republic*. Among his books are *Union Square*, a Literary Guild choice in 1933, *On the Shore*, and *The Foundry*.

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928), distinguished novelist and poet, earned his living at the outset of his career as an architect. Both his novels and his poetry reflect his awareness of the tragic in life, his sense of the irony involved in human relationships, and his fearless facing of the grimmer aspects of life.

MARGARET HARRIMAN is a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker*. Some of her profiles of theater people have been collected in a volume ironically entitled *Take Them Up Tenderly*.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633) was educated at Cambridge, where he was university orator. Of a prominent family, himself a man of great brilliance, he took holy orders and devoted himself to a small country parish at Bemerton. His poems were posthumously published. They reflect the conflict between worldly and spiritual desires.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1634) was an English clergyman who wrote exquisite poetry in a pagan mood celebrating the joys of love and life, urging the delights of the senses, and expressing the beauties of rural life and the charm of folk customs. His short poems are noted for the perfection of their form, their fancy, and zest for living.

DU BOSE HEYWARD (1885-1940) was an American poet, novelist, and playwright whose life in the South and observation of Negroes on the Charleston waterfront gave him the material for the sympathetic portraits of colored people found in his novels, *Porgy* and *Mamba's Daughters*, both of which were later dramatized.

EARNEST A. HOOTON (1887- ), born in Clemansville, Wisconsin, is a professor at Harvard and the author of *Ancient Inhabitants of the Canary Islands*, *The Indians of Pecos*, and *Up from the Ape*.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1889) became a convert to Catholicism and later a Jesuit priest. Little of his verse was printed or known during his lifetime, but in 1918 Robert Bridges published his poetry in book form. Nature and religious themes were his chief concern, and to these he gave expression in original and noteworthy forms.

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936), born in Shropshire, England, was professor of Latin at University College, London. His first volume of poetry was *A Shropshire Lad* (1896). His second volume, *Last Poems*, was published almost thirty years later.

ALDOUS HUXLEY (1894- ), the third son of Leonard Huxley (eldest son and biographer of Thomas Henry Huxley) and Julia Arnold (niece of Matthew Arnold and sister of Mrs. Humphrey Ward), was educated at Eton and Oxford. He has been a prolific writer. Some of his novels are *Crome Yellow*, *Annie Hall*, *Barren Leaves*, *Point Counterpoint*, *Eyeless in Gaza*, and *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*. He has also written many volumes of essays, including *Do What You Will*, *Brief Candles*, *Proper Studies*, and *Ends and Means*. Mr. Huxley is now living in California.

ROBINSON JEFFERS (1887- ) lives in Carmel, California, where he writes his poetry in a tower studio he built with his own hands. Reserved and self-sufficient, he has devoted himself to poetry which reflects his knowledge of the strange depths of human personality and his acceptance of the tragedy of life. Among his books are *Cawdor*, *The Women at Point Sur*, *The Roan Stallion*, *Selected Poems*, and *Be Angry at the Sun*.

MADGE JENNISON (1874- ) has written a number of novels, among them *Dominance*, *Invitation to the Dance*, and *The Sunrise Turn*.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821) expresses in his poetry both sensuous beauty and the truth it reveals. His life was tragically shadowed by tuberculosis, which caused his early death, but his name is one of the glories of English poetry, not "writ in water" as he feared.

FREDA KIRCHWEY (1885- ), born at Lake Placid, New York, was a reporter on the *Morning Telegraph* and on the editorial staff of *Every Week*. She has been with *The Nation* since 1918 as managing editor, literary editor, and publisher and owner since 1937.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH (1893- ), a professor at Columbia University and formerly an editor of *The Nation*, has become widely known not only for his dramatic criticism but for his general criticism of the arts and of contemporary life. Among his books are *Experience and Art*, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius*, *The Modern Temper*, *Was Europe a Success?*, *The American Drama Since 1918*.

OLIVER LA FARGE (1901- ) was educated at Groton and Harvard, majoring in anthropology. He has taught at Tulane University and has made anthropological field trips in Arizona, New Mexico, and Guatemala. He is president of the American Association on Indian Affairs. During the war he was historical officer of the Air Transport Command. His novel of Indian life, *Laughing Boy*, won a Pulitzer award. He has also written *The Enemy Gods*, *All the Young Men*, *Sparks Fly Upward*, and his autobiography, *Raw Material*.

CLARA LAIDLAW is a teacher of high-school English in Michigan. She has won three Avery Hopwood awards, two in fiction and one in the essay, at the University of Michigan. *The Little Black Boys* won the Avery Hopwood award for 1942.

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD (1876-1944) was a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin. He was distinguished not only as a philologist but as the author of several volumes of poetry and an autobiographical study, *The Locomotive God*.

SINCLAIR LEWIS (1885- ), born in Sauk Center, Minnesota, was Nobel prize winner in literature in 1930. His principal novels are *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Arrowsmith*, *Dodsworth*, *It Can't Happen Here*, and *Cass Timberlane*.

VACHEL LINDSAY (1897-1931), born in Springfield, Illinois, devoted his life to poetry and lecturing. His books are *General Booth Enters Heaven and Other Poems*, *The Congo and Other Poems*, and *Collected Poems*.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892- ) was one of the editors of *Fortune Magazine*, later chief librarian of the Library of Congress in Washington. Some of his best known books are *Conquistador* (Pulitzer prize poem), *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City*, *Union Pacific—A Ballet*, *Panic*, *The Fall of the City*, and *Public Speech*.

KATHARINE MANSFIELD (1888-1923), British short-story writer and critic, was born in Wellington, New Zealand. She married John Middleton Murry in 1913 and became associated with him in editing a literary magazine called *Rhythm*, contributing short stories regularly. Some of her short story collections are *Bliss*, *The Garden Party*, *The Dove's Nest*, and *The Aloe*. Her criticism is to be found in *Novels and Novelists* and her *Journal*.

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678) was a poet, satirist and politician in the time of Charles I, Cromwell, and Charles II. He served as secretary to Milton in 1657. The intellectual subtlety and richness of imagery of *To His Coy Mistress* have made it influential on later poets as they consider the inevitable passing of love and beauty.

JOHN MASEFIELD (1878- ) was born in Ludbury, Herefordshire, England. After serving for three years on a merchant ship and working at odd jobs for several years in New York City, he turned to poetry. Among his works are *The Everlasting Mercy*, *Reynard the Fox*, *Midsummer Night*, and *The Coming of Christ*. He is Poet Laureate of England.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS (1869- ), born in Garnett, Kansas, was admitted to the bar in 1891. Among his publications are *Spoon River Anthology*, *The Great Valley*, *Domesday Book*, *The New Spoon River*, *The Tale of Chicago*, *Vachel Lindsay*, *Poems of People*, and *Mark Twain*.

MORROW MAYO (1897- ) has been an American newspaperman and a contributor to such periodicals as *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's Magazine*.

KARL MENNINGER (1893- ) is one of America's leading psychiatrists and a Counselor of the American Psychiatric Association. In his nontechnical books for the layman Dr. Menninger has made distinctive contributions to popular understanding of the forces in the human personality that we can use to make our lives happy and productive. His books include *The Human Mind*, *Man against Himself*, and *Love against Hate*. With his brother, Colonel William C. Menninger, and his father he conducts the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas. He is president of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892- ) was born in Rockland, Maine. One of her finest poems, *Renascence*, was written before she was nineteen. She won the Pulitzer prize for poetry in 1922 and wrote the libretto for *The King's Henchman*, which was performed in New York in 1927. Some of her publications are *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* (1923), *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems* (1928), *Fatal Interview* (1931), *Wine from these Grapes* (1934), and *Conversation at Midnight* (1937).

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674), England's greatest epic poet, devoted nearly twenty of his best years to the cause of liberty, as political pamphleteer and Foreign Secretary under the Commonwealth government. This work is considered responsible for his loss of eyesight. The *Areopagitica* (1644) remains one of the finest defenses of freedom of thought and expression. Placed high among English poets for his sonnets and his shorter poems, such as *Lycidas*, *I Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*, Milton is honored especially as the poet of the great epic of man's fall, *Paradise Lost*.

JONATHAN MITCHELL (1895- ) was born in Portland, Maine. He was a reporter on the *New York World* from 1921 to 1929 and London and Paris correspondent from 1926 to 1928. He is author of *Goosesteps to Peace*.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896), English poet and romanticist in prose, was by no means merely the "idle singer of an empty day," for he busied himself with the designing and manufacturing of beautiful textiles, stained glass windows, furniture, and book printing, as well as with propaganda for a socialist order of society. His *Dream of John Ball* (1888) and *News from Nowhere* (1891) are the best known of his social criticisms and visions; *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870) illustrates his power of writing simple narrative verse.

THEODORE MORRISON (1901- ) is a member of the department of English at Harvard, author of several volumes of poetry, and contributor of critical essays to a number of magazines and scholarly journals.

LEWIS MUMFORD (1895- ) is a critic of art and of society. Among his publications are *The Story of Utopias*, *Herman Melville*, *Technics and Civilization*, *The Culture of Cities*, and *The Condition of Man*.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (Cardinal Newman) (1801-1890) was an English author, an Anglican and later Catholic divine, and founder of the Oxford Movement. His conversion from Anglicanism to the Church of Rome he defended with sincerity and simplicity in his spiritual autobiography, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. *The Idea of a University* was a series of lectures concerning the founding of a Catholic university in Dublin to be devoted to study of the humanities and to moral training.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744) holds his place among the great English poets chiefly because of the perfection of his heroic couplets and the keenness and polish of his satiric verse. His *Essay on Man* is a long philosophic poem dealing with man's relation to himself, to society, and to the universe. His physical deformity and his ill-health are probably responsible for the bitterness of his personal satires, his constant quarrels with his friends, his pettiness and vindictiveness.

MARCEL PROUST (1871-1922), generally regarded as one of the most notable of modern novelists, was born in Paris. His *Remembrance of Things Past*, a monumental work of many volumes, has been considered one of the greatest novels of all time.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1618) represents the Renaissance type of versatile individual, poet, historian, essayist, courtier, soldier, explorer, statesman. *The Conclusion* was probably written on the night before his execution. His unfinished *History of the World*, written in prison, 1604-1614, reflects the vast ambition of this Elizabethan courtier and man of letters.

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS (1896- ), a novelist whose book *The Yearling* won a Pulitzer prize in 1939, tells in *Cross Creek* of her life among the people of a remote Florida hamlet.

JOHN REED (1887-1920), born at Portland, Oregon, was called by Upton Sinclair "the playboy of the social revolution." He worked on the *American Magazine*, became managing editor of *The Masses* and when Villa's revolt broke out in Mexico, he reported for the *World* and sent graphic sketches to *Metropolitan*. After the Russian revolution he wrote his best known book, *Ten Days that Shook the World*.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935), born in Head Tide, Maine, spent most of his summers at the MacDowell Colony, Peterboro, New Hampshire, where much of his work was written. In addition to *Tristram* and his *Collected*

*Poems*, some of his most significant works are *The Man Against the Sky*, *Cavender's House*, and *The Glory of the Nightingales*. Three times he was a Pulitzer prize winner.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894) was the sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Her poetry is marked by exquisite melody and perfection of form in her treatment of her favorite themes, love and religious ecstasy.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882), was a Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter whose work is marked by its fusion of passion and mystical tone. The union of body and soul is the chief theme of his sonnet sequence *The House of Life* (1870-1881), inspired mainly by his love for Elizabeth Siddall, his wife.

LEO ROSTEN (1908- ) has been a teacher and research worker. Among his books are *The Washington Correspondents*, *The Strangest Places*, and *Hollywood: The Movie Colony*, *The Movie Makers*. Under the pseudonym of Leonard Q. Hoss he is the author of *The Education of Hyman Kaplan*.

MURIEL RUKEYSER (1913- ), a native New Yorker, was selected for her *Theory of Flight* as winner in the "Yale Series of Younger Poets" contest. She has been on the staff of *New Theatre*.

BERTRAND RUSSELL (1882- ) was appointed lecturer at Trinity College at Cambridge in 1910. His first important book was *The Principles of Mathematics*. Among his works are *The Problems of Philosophy*, *Mysticism and Logic*, *Marriage and Morals*, and *The Conquest of Happiness*.

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY (1900-1944), French flier and writer, gave vivid literary expression to his experience both as commercial pilot and as reconnaissance flier in the Battle of France in his books *Night Flight*, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, and *Flight to Arras*.

CARL SANDBURG (1878- ) has won recognition as a vigorous poet and critic of American life in his *Chicago Poems*, *Smoke and Steel*, *The People, Yes*, and more recently as a biographer of Lincoln in his monumental study, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, which completes his earlier volumes, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*.

GLADYS SCHMITT (1909- ) won the Dial Press award in 1942 for her first novel, *The Gates of Aulis*.

MARK SCHORER (1908- ) is a young Wisconsin writer whose short stories have appeared from time to time in *Story Magazine*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616), poet, dramatist, and actor, has contributed richly to the sonnets of our language both conventional and original themes. He varied the classic Italian sonnet form of octave and sestet by using a new form of three quatrains and a couplet. His sonnets are universally accepted as among the finest in English literature.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822) was a rebel against conventional authority from the days of his Eton school boy opposition to the "fagging system" and his expulsion from Oxford for a tract on *The Necessity of Atheism*. His poetry lives among the finest expressions of revolutionary ardor and hope for the eventual brotherhood of man.

TESS SLESINGER (1905-1945) worked on New York newspapers, and wrote short stories for *Story*, *The American Mercury*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Forum*. She

was principally concerned with portrayal in fictional form of the problems of intellectuals in a changing society, the theme of her novel, *The Unpossessed*.

THEODORE SPENCER (1902- ) is a professor of English at Harvard and a poet and critic. His recent contribution to Shakespearean criticism, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man*, has been highly praised. His collections of poetry are *The Paradox in the Circle* and *An Act of Life*.

STEPHEN SPENDER (1909- ) is one of the group of young Oxford poets who have devoted themselves largely to criticisms of the present social order. In addition to his *Poems* (1936) he has written a verse play, *Trial of a Judge*, and a critical study, *The Destructive Element*.

LINCOLN STEFFENS (1866-1936) was a newspaperman and editor of *McClure's Magazine* from 1902 to 1906, associate editor of *American Magazine* and *Everybody's Magazine* from 1906 to 1911. He first attracted wide attention for his exposé of political and civic corruption in the United States (*The Shame of the Cities*, 1904). *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* is recognized as a masterpiece of personal analysis and social criticism.

JOHN STEINBECK (1900- ) is a California writer whose experiences as newspaperman, ranch hand, carpenter's helper, painter's apprentice, and laborer make him a valid critic of American life. His interest in the psychopathic is especially evident in *Of Mice and Men* (1937); his novel *In Dubious Battle* (1936) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) have given us memorable pictures of the problems of America's laboring classes.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894) was a romantic novelist, short story writer, and essayist whose life of physical suffering and mental conflicts was in contrast to the gay, zestful mood of most of his writings. Many of his most delightful essays reveal the joy of an adventurous spirit in travel and in strange places.

JESSE STUART (1908- ) was born at Riverton, Kentucky, the scene of many of his stories and celebrated in the sonnets which appeared in his *Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow*. The story of his Kentucky boyhood and background is found in his latest book, *Beyond Dark Hills*. Much of his work has been published in *The Yale Review*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Story Magazine* and *Esquire*.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642) was one of the most famous of the so-called Cavalier poets at the court of King Charles I. He fought for his king in the civil war and died in exile. He is best known for his short love lyrics.

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD (1894- ) has had a wide experience of American life, from California to New York. Her work includes social criticism and poems in subtle metaphysical vein (*Calling Western Union*, 1936, and *Collected Poems*, 1938). She is now on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College.

DEEMS TAYLOR (1885- ) is a composer and writer. In addition to wide experience as an editor and journalist he has been music critic for the *New York World* and the *New York American* and intermission commentator for the New York Philharmonic Symphony broadcasts from 1936-43. He has written *Of Men and Music*, *The Well-tempered Listener*, *History of the Movies*, and edited *A Treasury of Gilbert and Sullivan*.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892) is considered the most representative poet of the Victorian era in the faith which finally resolves his doubts, in his acceptance of the new science and the age of industrialism as bringing human



progress, and in the conservatism, which made him an acceptable poet-laureate. Valued in his own day for his ideas, he lives today rather for the felicity of his diction and his skill in handling lyric forms.

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907) was an English poet of Catholic faith who united religious mysticism with power of vivid imagery and intense feeling.

JAMES THURBER (1894- ) has for many years delighted *New Yorker* readers with his sketches accompanied by line drawings, commenting with humor and irony upon man's foibles. Among his books are *My Life and Hard Times*, *Let Your Mind Alone*, and the recent collection of some of his best work entitled *The Thurber Carnival*.

RIDGELY TORRENCE (1875- ), born at Xenia, Ohio, was editor of *The Critic* (1903); associate editor of *The Cosmopolitan* (1905-1907); and poetry editor of *The New Republic* (1920-1934). He is the author of *The House of a Hundred Lights*, *Abelard and Heloise* (poetic drama), *The Undefended Line* (play) and *Plays for a Negro Theatre*.

MARK TWAIN (Samuel Clemens) (1835-1910), first of American humorists, was reared in Hannibal, Missouri, a river town he has immortalized as background of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. *Innocents Abroad* (1869) brought him recognition in Europe as well as at home. He excels in power to tell a swift-moving, realistic, and humorous tale, bringing to bear his vivid impressions of the varied life he has known.

MARK VAN DOREN (1894- ) is a professor in the English Department at Columbia University. He is known also as poet and critic.

EDITH WHARTON (1862-1937), a native of New York, became well-known for her novels ironically portraying the privileged social class into which she was born. She spent much time abroad, especially in France. *The Age of Innocence* won a Pulitzer prize in 1920. Among her other novels are *Ethan Frome*, *The House of Mirth*, *The Children*, and *Glimpses of the Moon*.

VINCENT VAN GOGH (1853-1890), born in Holland, was closely associated with the art movements of Impressionism and later of Expressionism in France. His passionate devotion to art and to life is revealed in the memorable letters he wrote to his beloved patron brother, Theodore. These have been published by Irving Stone under the title of *Dear Theo: The Autobiography of Vincent van Gogh*.

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892) has exerted a great liberalizing effect on American poetry and American life. His *Leaves of Grass*, first published in 1855, startled the country with its freedom from conventions of theme and form, but it was not until rather late in life that he was taken seriously as a great original poet.

THOMAS WOLFE (1900-1938) won recognition as a truly creative American novelist. He was educated at the University of North Carolina and Harvard. For a time he taught English at New York University. His best known novels are *Look Homeward, Angel*, *Of Time and the River*, *You Can't Go Home Again*, and *The Web and the Rock*.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850), English poet, was early influenced by the French Revolution to embrace liberal principles, but on his disillusionment with France and England following the Revolution, he became conservative. As poet of nature and man he ranks high, and he was most influential in bringing

about, with Coleridge, a revolution in the diction and subject matter of poetry. He advocated use of the "very language" of men in treating themes from rustic and humble life.

RICHARD WRIGHT (1908- ) was born on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi. In *Black Boy*, the first volume of his autobiography, he tells the moving, often sordid, story of his childhood. In 1940 his novel, *Native Son*, was a Book of the Month Club selection. *12 Million Black Voices* is an interpretive and pictorial representation of the lives of Negroes in the United States.

ELINOR WYLIE (1885-1928) began writing poetry as a very young girl. *Nets to Catch the Wind* appeared in 1921. And after her marriage to poet and critic William Rose Benét (1923), she turned to writing novels. She is the author of *Jennifer Lorn* and *The Orphan Angel*, an imaginative romance about Shelley. Her work is noted for its exquisite precision and delicacy.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939) was the greatest poet of the Irish Literary Renaissance, which has given us rich treatments in prose, poetry, and drama of Irish folklore and history, as well as expressions of Irish nationalist feeling. His *Collected Poems*, published in 1933, represent a passing from the poetry of sheer lyric artistry and imagination to poetry of social criticism and intellectual subtlety. Among his best known plays are *Deirdre*, *The Hour Glass*, *Cathleen Ní Hoolihan*.

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